

From: [REDACTED]
To: [VetsMI](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Inaccuracies when referring to online retailers of veterinary medicines
Date: 07 August 2026 17:22:12
Attachments: [image216361.jpg](#)

Dear Team

In relation to your recent investigation into the vets market:

<https://connect.cma.gov.uk/consultations/draft-funding-order-and-undertaking>, and the aim to increase competition in the supply of pet medicines, we wish to highlight some inaccuracies within your documents and terminology.

In several places, in a number of your documents, you refer to online retailers and online pharmacies interchangeably. This is not accurate and potentially misleading.

An example is [here](#)

*2.10 Choices regarding medicines: FOPs provide prescribed veterinary medicines as part of their recommended treatments for pets. Prescribed veterinary medicines can also be obtained from third-party retailers (usually **online pharmacies**). Where pet owners wish to purchase prescribed medication from a third-party retailer, and it is appropriate to do so (for example where the medication can be easily administered by the pet owner and is prescribed in a non-urgent context or is a preventative treatment), they need to request a written prescription from their vet.*

Another example [here](#) is as follows:

‘Group or Network’ means a group or network comprising:

- (a) a person or entity providing Veterinary Services by carrying on or operating more than one FOP or OOH Centre, or a combination of FOPs, OOH Centres, **online pharmacies**, Referral Centres and/or other business assets or trade; or*
- (b) more than one person or entity which is involved in the provision of Veterinary Services at one or more FOPs, OOH Centres, **online pharmacies**, Referral Centres or other business assets or trade, and*
- (c) where, in either case, there is a Main Entity in relation to those FOPs, OOH Centres, **online pharmacies**, Referral Centres or other business assets or trade.*

I believe you mean online retailers here in these examples rather than only online pharmacies.

A pharmacy can generally only be referred to as such in Great Britain (GB) (i.e. in England, Scotland and Wales) if it is registered with ourselves – the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC), the pharmacy regulator in GB – as registered pharmacy premises. This includes online pharmacies which must have physical premises registered with us. The title “Pharmacy” (and some other related terms) is a legally protected and restricted title in legislation, under Section 78 of the Medicines Act 1968, as amended.

The following definitions are not correct.

‘Authorised Online Pharmacy’ means a retailer listed on the VMD Register of Online Retailers.

‘VMD Register of Online Retailers’ means the register, hosted on the Veterinary Medicines Directorate website, of all online pharmacies which are authorised to sell POM-V medication.

The VMD’s Register contains other retailers also, not only registered pharmacies. Our understanding is that the majority of the retailers on the list are not registered pharmacies, registered with ourselves – the GPhC - but are veterinary practices and veterinary surgeon registered practices.

We would ask that you please further consult with the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) for full clarification of their Register of Online Retailers and ask that these inaccuracies please be addressed and corrected. Thank you.

I have also copied in a colleague, [REDACTED] from the VMD.

Please do get in touch if you require any further clarification or explanation from ourselves.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Inspection Operations Manager

General Pharmaceutical Council

Level 14, One Cabot Square | Canary Wharf | London | E14 4QW

Direct: 0203 713 7986

Email: [REDACTED]

www.pharmacyregulation.org



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