
Overview

This standard covers assessing and planning the physical therapy of animals.

The Veterinary Surgeons Act (1966) limits the activities that may be carried out by those who are not qualified veterinary surgeons. All activities should be carried out within the constraints of the Veterinary Surgeons Act and the Veterinary Surgery (Exemptions) Order 1962.

Users of the standard will need to be appropriately trained and ensure that their practice applies scientifically robust information, humane standards and policies, and that they work within the limits of their authority, expertise, training, competence and experience.

This standard is suitable for those working in the animal care sector with responsibility for assessing and planning the approach to the therapy of animals on referral from a veterinary surgeon.

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

- P1 work in accordance with the Veterinary Surgeons Act (1966), the Veterinary Surgery (Exemptions) Order 1962 and the limits of your own authority, expertise, training, competence and experience
- P2 maintain your own professional conduct and ethics and work within the limits of your own authority, expertise, training, competence and experience
- P3 work within the requirements of the relevant professional organisation
- P4 assess practices in a scientifically robust manner to determine their suitability, efficacy and welfare implications
- P5 comply with relevant animal health and welfare and other animal-related legislation and associated codes of practice at all times
- P6 assess how the needs of animals may best be provided while under your duty of care
- P7 assess the potential risks to health and safety in this area of work
- P8 develop a plan for the handling of animals undergoing physical therapy treatment
- P9 carry out an initial visual assessment of the animal
- P10 select a method of humane handling and control that is appropriate for the animal concerned in order to minimise the risks to the animal, yourself and others
- P11 assess the animal's therapy requirements in relation to their presenting condition and referral from a veterinary surgeon, taking into account pre-existing health conditions e.g. diabetes, epilepsy and medication
- P12 set appropriate and realistic short-term and long-term goals
- P13 formulate a physical therapy treatment plan following referral from a veterinary surgeon
- P14 ensure informed consent to handle and carry out therapy procedures on the animal is obtained from the owner
- P15 clarify and confirm the treatment that is to be carried out, the estimated cost and the method of payment
- P16 agree any actions to be carried by the owner following the therapy
- P17 ensure the owner understands the role and importance of veterinary referral, and of communication between the referring practice and therapist or rehabilitation centre
- P18 set up and maintain the required records including correct veterinary feedback reports
- P19 communicate professionally with veterinary surgeons and other animal-related professionals and paraprofessionals
- P20 plan, record and evaluate Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- K1 the requirements of the Veterinary Surgeons Act (1966) and the Veterinary Surgery (Exemptions) Order 1962 in relation to your role and the limits of your own authority, expertise, training, competence and experience
- K2 your professional responsibilities and the importance of Continuing Professional Development to maintain professional competence
- K3 how to assess practices in a scientifically robust manner to determine their suitability, efficacy and welfare implications
- K4 your responsibilities under relevant animal health and welfare and other animal-related legislation and codes of practice
- K5 how the needs of animals under your duty of care may be assessed and addressed
- K6 your responsibilities under relevant environmental and health and safety legislation, codes of practice and business policies
- K7 why it is important to confirm the condition of the animal and its requirements for treatment from the referral by a veterinary surgeon
- K8 the conditions and disorders commonly presented for therapy in terms of their aetiology, common signs, veterinary treatment and possible complications
- K9 the range of methods for handling and control and factors to be considered in their selection
- K10 how different **factors may affect the planning of handling and therapy**
- K11 how to assess the risks inherent in handling and controlling different types of animals
- K12 the anatomy and physiology of the species you are working with
- K13 the physiological effects of the therapy treatment
- K14 the physical effects of the therapy treatment
- K15 the possible behavioural effects of the therapy
- K16 how to formulate a treatment plan for an animal, taking into account specific medical or post-surgical conditions
- K17 the treatment needed for animals with specific medical and post-surgical conditions and how to administer these
- K18 how to assess the animal's suitability for the treatment plan and identify

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- any potential contra-indications
- K19 the importance of explaining the treatment plan to the owner
- K20 the importance of obtaining informed consent from the owner
- K21 the pre-treatment preparation that is required prior to therapy
- K22 the post-treatment procedures that need to be completed before an animal is returned to its accommodation or owner
- K23 possible post-treatment reactions and how to advise the owner on how to recognise and address them
- K24 post-treatment actions to be carried out by the owner in their own time
- K25 the importance of assessing the response to treatment and when to refer back to the veterinary surgeon
- K26 the role and importance of veterinary referral and communication between the centre and referring veterinary practice
- K27 the services available and the information required by different clients
- K28 the efficacy of different types of treatment and possible adverse reactions
- K29 how your actions, the actions of people or other animals may affect the behaviour, welfare and progress during physical therapy
- K30 appropriate records to be kept, the importance of confidentiality and the requirements of the Data Protection Act (1998)
- K31 the role and importance of communication with other animal related professionals and paraprofessionals
- K32 your legal and professional liability when working to provide therapy to animals and the importance of appropriate insurance cover

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Scope/range

Factors that may affect the planning of handling and therapy:

- 1 age
- 2 species
- 3 breed
- 4 temperament
- 5 surroundings
- 6 prior experiences
- 7 owner's influence
- 8 current health status
- 9 clinical history
- 10 prescribed drugs and their effects
- 11 reason for referral for therapy
- 12 presence and activity of other people/animals in the therapy environment
- 13 welfare requirements
- 14 intended use or role of the animal

Glossary

Veterinary Surgeons Act (1966):

It is illegal under the Veterinary Surgeons Act (1966) for non-veterinary surgeons to practise veterinary surgery.

The Act defines Veterinary Surgery as:

- the diagnosis of diseases in, and injuries to, animals including tests performed on animals for diagnostic purposes;
- the giving of advice based upon such diagnosis;
- the medical or surgical treatment of animals; and
- the performance of surgical operations on animals.

The Veterinary Surgery (Exemptions) Order 1962 allows for the treatment of animals by physiotherapy, provided that the animal has first been seen by a veterinary surgeon who has diagnosed the condition and decided that it should be treated by physiotherapy under his/her direction.

"Physiotherapy" is interpreted as including all kinds of manipulative therapy. It therefore includes osteopathy and chiropractic but would not, for example, include acupuncture or aromatherapy.

Current animal welfare legislation:

- England and Wales, Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Scotland, Animal Health and Welfare Act 2006
- Northern Ireland, Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

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