Vet Industry Reacts to Biggest Sector Reforms in 50 Years

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, July 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The government has published its White Paper setting out proposed reforms including mandatory price lists for common treatments, greater ownership transparency, a proposed £21 cap on written prescription fees, licensing for vet practices, inspections, compliance reports and the potential creation of a new independent veterinary ombudsman.

Announcement here:
https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cheaper-vet-fees-and-new-ombudsman-in-biggest-reforms-to-vet-sector-in-half-a-century

Eddie Holmes, Founder of VetsCompared, welcomes the move toward greater transparency, but warns that presenting the reforms as a route to cheaper vet fees may be misleading.

Eddie Holmes, Founder of ComplianceForVets and VetsCompared, commented:

“We welcome the government’s intention to improve transparency, competition and outcomes for pet owners. The veterinary sector needs reform, and pet owners should have clearer information on prices, ownership, treatment options, prescriptions and routes of redress.

However, there is a serious risk that these reforms are being presented as a route to cheaper vet fees when, in practice, they could result in higher fees and higher insurance premiums unless implementation is handled carefully.

Mandatory licensing, inspections, published compliance reports, price disclosure, complaint handling, ombudsman processes and data submissions will all create new operational burdens for practices. Large corporate groups can centralise this work across compliance, legal and data teams, but independent practices do not have the same capacity.

That cost has to go somewhere.

If written prescription fees are capped, that may reduce one visible charge for pet owners, but practices are likely to recover lost income through consultation fees, diagnostics, procedures, medication reviews or care plans. That is not necessarily profiteering - it is basic cost recovery in a high-pressure clinical business.

There is also a risk that price transparency pushes some prices up, not down. If independent practices discover they are materially cheaper than corporate competitors, many may conclude they have been undercharging and move closer to the local market rate.

The policy objective is right. Pet owners deserve transparency. But the government and CMA must ensure these reforms are proportionate, digitally deliverable and realistic for independent practices. Otherwise, a package promoted as reducing costs could end up increasing fees, increasing insurance premiums and weakening the independent sector that many pet owners trust most."

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