

West Midlands Referrals policy on referring/redirecting cases for hydrotherapy, physiotherapy and rehabilitation,

Effective from January 2017

We leave the choice of recommendation for hydrotherapy, physiotherapy and rehabilitation to the general practice that refers cases to us.

Parts of these industries are unregulated and the experience, facilities and expertise can vary widely from centre to centre.

Some hydrotherapy centres voluntarily submit themselves to scrutiny by the Canine Hydrotherapy Association and the National Association of Registered Canine Hydrotherapists and this at least gives an indication of a progressive attitude.

With more and more vets getting personally involved with hydrotherapy rehabilitation and physiotherapy now, and with our catchment area having a radius of well over 100 miles, we simply can't have a comprehensive knowledge of the rehabilitation facilities available over this large area.

Our post-operative care sheets given to clients and our written reports sent to the referring vets indicate whether we feel that hydrotherapy and/or physiotherapy would be advisable. This may vary with the particular procedure and also with the individual patient. If clients are in doubt, then we can advise on the suitability of the case for hydrotherapy. When clients are sourcing hydrotherapy, physiotherapy and rehabilitation, as a matter of policy we now recommend that the clients ask their own vets (who referred their case to us in the first place and who have the relevant local knowledge) to recommend their preferred local providers.

We always send a report promptly to the referring general practitioner veterinary practice every time that we see a case, even if we have only done a quick wound check. Our reports almost invariably go out the same day. Unfortunately we often don't hear from the referring vets if they have seen the case since we last did, unless there is a major problem. For example we would be unlikely to hear about the development of skin issues or ear disease or seizures that might be completely unrelated to our involvement in the case, but which would nevertheless have a bearing on the suitability of a case for hydrotherapy.

So, as the referring general practice vets are the ones advising their clients of where to source rehabilitation services, and as the general practice can be confident that they have up-to-date copies of all of our notes, we ask that the referring general practice is the one that is asked by the hydrotherapy, physiotherapy or rehabilitation centre to "authorise" treatment at their particular centre. If we are asked to "authorise" these procedures, we will still need to refer the hydrotherapy, physiotherapy or rehabilitation centres back to the referring general practice to authorise the redirection/referral.