



### **Pre-purchase examination:**

The aim of the pre-purchase examination (PPE) is to carry out a thorough clinical examination on behalf of a potential purchaser in order to identify and assess issues of a veterinary nature that could prejudice a horse's suitability for its intended use.

A standardised clinical examination is performed. The findings are assessed by the vet, who will form an opinion as to the significance of the findings and any possible adverse implications they may have for the prospective purchaser's intended use of the horse. The findings and opinion will be reported to the purchaser verbally at the time of the examination or soon afterwards, as well as being documented in a certificate that is issued to the purchaser.

If the horse to be vetted belongs to a client of the practice or is known by the practice, permission for full disclosure of the clinical history will be requested from the vendor. If this is not granted, we will decline to perform the examination.

Certificates are not transferable to another purchaser. The pre-purchase examination provides an assessment of the horse at the time of examination to help inform the potential purchaser's decision whether or not to continue with their purchase. It is not a guarantee of a horse's suitability for the intended purpose.

### **Incomplete examinations:**

#### **2 Stage Pre-purchase examinations:**

We recommend a 5 stage PPE to all clients, however if requested, we will perform a limited (2 stage) examination. This is a less expensive option however the examination will be limited in its scope and may not detect important clinical factors that could otherwise influence the potential purchaser's decision to continue with the purchase of the horse. For this reason, a disclaimer must be signed prior to a 2 stage pre-purchase examination being carried out. A copy of the disclaimer can be downloaded from this website. Please complete 2 copies of the form, one to be returned by post/fax or handed to the vet at the time of the exam, the other to be retained for your own records.

### **Insurance vettings:**

Insurance examinations carried out for an existing owner of a horse may follow the same format as the five stage pre-purchase examination, but they will not include an opinion and should not be interpreted as a pre-purchase examination.

## **The examination:**

The standard examination is conducted in five stages, although the exact sequence of the examination may vary. The stages are:

### *Stage 1: Preliminary examination*

This is a thorough external examination of the animal at rest using visual observation, palpation and manipulation to detect clinically apparent signs of injury, disease or physical abnormality. It includes an examination of the teeth, a thorough examination of the horse's eyes in a darkened area and auscultation of the horse's heart and lungs at rest. Examination of the eyes does not include dilating the pupil but will include examination of internal and external structures. The examination does not include examination of the inside of the prepuce (sheath), a height measurement or any examination for pregnancy.

### *Stage 2: Walk and trot, in hand*

The animal is walked and then trotted in hand to detect abnormalities of gait and action. Ideally this is carried out on firm, level ground. The horse is turned sharply each way and is backed for a few paces. Flexion tests of all four limbs and trotting in a circle on a firm surface may be carried out if it is considered safe and appropriate to do so.

### *Stage 3: Exercise phase*

The horse is given sufficient exercise to:

1. Allow assessment of the horse when it has an increased breathing effort and an increased heart rate.
2. Allow assessment of the horse's gait at walk, trot, canter and, if appropriate, gallop.
3. Allow assessment of the horse for the purpose of stage five. If ridden exercise is not undertaken then this stage may be conducted by exercising the horse on the lunge.

### *Stage 4: Period of rest and re-examination*

The horse is allowed to stand quietly for a period. During this time the respiratory and cardiovascular systems will be monitored as they return to their resting levels.

### *Stage 5: Second trot up*

The animal is trotted in hand again to look for any signs of strains or injuries made evident by the exercise and rest stages.

## **Flexion tests and trotting in a circle**

Flexion tests and trotting in a circle on a firm surface are not mandatory parts of the standard procedure, however, they often provide useful additional information about a horse. There may be circumstances when the examining vet concludes that it is unsafe or inappropriate to perform these tests.

### **Blood Sample**

A blood sample may be taken for storage (usually for 6 months) for possible future analysis to detect substances present in the horse's system at the time of the examination that might have masked any factors affecting the horse's suitability for the purchaser's intended use. If a blood sample is not taken, the reason for this will be noted on the certificate.

### **Identification of the horse**

The horse will be identified by recording the horse's markings in the form of a diagram and written description as well as searching for a microchip and inspecting any available documentation. The diagram may be omitted if the presence of a microchip can be confirmed by scanner and the diagram of an accompanying passport matches the horse. In this instance, both microchip and passport numbers will be recorded on the certificate.

### **Variations from the standard examination**

Whilst there is a recognised format for the examination, the vet may vary it where there are good practical or clinical reasons. In circumstances where it is not possible or appropriate to complete all the stages, or where the standard five-stage examination is limited to stages one and two at the specific request of the purchaser, the variations from the standard procedure will be made clear to the purchaser and on the certificate. The results of any additional procedures (e.g. radiography or endoscopy) carried out at the request of the purchaser will also be reported and recorded on the certificate or in an addendum to it. The original records of these procedures (such as radiographs, ultrasonographs, photographs) will be retained by the practice.

### **The certificate and opinion**

The certificate will report the findings of the examination including all significant signs of disease, injury or physical abnormality. The certificate will include the vet's opinion as to whether or not, on the balance of probabilities, those findings prejudice the horse's suitability for purchase for its intended use.

If the examining vet considers that the clinical history represents a greater than normal risk of the horse developing future problems (i.e. recurrence or delayed consequences of a prior condition), or that it may do so, this will be indicated on the certificate along with an explanatory note. Despite such observations, the horse may nevertheless be suitable for purchase based on a risk/benefit analysis.

### **Limitations of the examination:**

#### **Previous treatments**

The horse may have received previous or concurrent veterinary treatment unknown to the examining vet. At the time of the examination the horse may have been subject to some previously administered drug or medication having the effect of masking or concealing some disease, injury or physical abnormality that might otherwise have been clinically discoverable. A blood sample taken at the time of the examination may be used later to seek to determine this.

#### **Ownership**

The certificate serves to identify the horse that was examined, but it is not the responsibility of the examining veterinary surgeon to ascertain that the declared seller has legal title in the horse. It is the responsibility of the purchaser to satisfy themselves as to the ownership of the horse before purchase and to verify the records of any microchip with the relevant database.

#### **Age**

Without appropriate paper records from foalhood it is not possible to confirm the age of a horse with accuracy. Estimates of age based on a dental examination are imprecise and unreliable and exact ageing using dentition alone is not possible. In the absence of documentary evidence, the term 'aged' may be used to refer to a horse considered after examination to be over 15 years of age.

#### **Vices**

Vices are objectionable habits, but are not necessarily detectable during the examination. However, if vices, or evidence of vices, are observed during the examination they will be reported to the purchaser and recorded on the certificate and taken into account in the concluding opinion.

#### **Seller's warranty**

The opinion provides no assurances in respect of matters that can only be established by a seller's representations to the purchaser. A seller's warranty is a matter between the seller and the purchaser and is not the responsibility of the examining veterinary surgeon. The purchaser should consider obtaining a written warranty from the seller covering, for example, matters such as medical or surgical history, height, freedom from vices, temperament, non--



administration of drugs prior to the examination and the horse's previous or existing uses and performance levels.

### **Height**

For the purposes of this examination, the height of a horse or pony is not the concern of the examining veterinary surgeon.

### **Insurance**

Where possible and if required, the prospective purchaser is advised to confirm that they are able to obtain suitable insurance cover before purchasing the horse. Pre-purchase examination certificates are suitable for submission to insurance companies with a proposal for insurance of the horse.