

7. Equine pre-purchase examinations

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Introduction

7.1 Equine pre-purchase examinations (PPEs), or horse vetting, are carried out at the request of a potential purchaser (or agent), to determine, so far as is possible by clinical examination, whether the animal is suitable for the intended use.

7.2 Examining a horse on behalf of a vendor is not generally advisable except in the special circumstances of an auction of horses.

Examination

7.3 The PPE is an assessment of the horse based on a recognised examination carried out in two or five stages (although all stages may not be completed if the horse fails the examination at one of the early stages).

7.4 Generally, the examination is carried out by a veterinary surgeon with no prior knowledge of the horse's clinical condition and who has no access to the horse's clinical records. Some information about a horse may be made available by the vendor.

7.5 The PPE provides an assessment of the horse at the time of examination, to assist the decision to purchase, or not, and is an indication, not a guarantee, of a horse's suitability for intended use.

Certificate

7.6 All clinical findings and clinical information within the documents which are relied upon, and

that are relevant to the opinion must be stated in the certificate.

7.7 It is advisable to retain copies of all relevant information considered as part of the examination and which are referred to in the certificate.

Conflict of interest

7.8 Generally, a person intending to purchase a horse will seek a PPE by a veterinary surgeon and, for this purpose, becomes that veterinary surgeon's client.

7.9 Ideally, veterinary surgeons should not carry out PPEs where the vendor is an existing client and/or has a personal relationship with the veterinary surgeon, because of the conflict of interest. However, if, for practical or other reasons, veterinary surgeons do, they should follow additional safeguards to ensure the examination is not only fair, but perceived to be fair, by the client requesting the PPE.

7.10 These additional safeguards are:

- a. the veterinary surgeon makes the purchaser aware that the vendor is also a client and/or has a personal relationship with the veterinary surgeon, and the potential purchaser has no objection. If there is an objection, the vendor's veterinary surgeon must not act;
- b. the vendor agrees to permit disclosure of relevant clinical/case records. If permission cannot be obtained then the vendor's veterinary surgeon should not act. If the records reveal a factor which is likely to be prejudicial to the purchaser's intended use, the purchaser should be informed with the vendor's permission in advance of the examination; and,
- c. it is made clear to both parties that in this instance the veterinary surgeon is acting on behalf of the purchaser.

7.11 While having regard to the usual constraints of client confidentiality, there may be occasions when the examining veterinary surgeon considers it appropriate, for reasons of animal welfare (including good husbandry) or public interest, to advise the vendor of relevant findings. In these circumstances, common sense and courtesy should prevail.

Further information

7.12 Detailed guidance is available for veterinary surgeons on how to carry out PPEs from the [British Equine Veterinary Association \[http://www.beva.org.uk\]](http://www.beva.org.uk) (BEVA).

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