

## Found the horse of your dreams?

### How do you know it is really in good health and will be fit for purpose?

If you are looking to buy a new horse or pony (or even your first horse or pony!) you will no doubt have spent several hours looking through adverts and contacting sellers. But before you go and fall in love with your perfect horse and hand over your hard-earned cash, how thoroughly have you been able to check the health of this horse? It is advisable to arrange for an equine vet to perform a 'Pre-Purchase Examination' or 'Vetting' on the horse or pony that you are interested in buying.

### What is a pre-purchase examination?

The pre-purchase examination (P.P.E. or vetting) is a thorough and detailed clinical exam of the horse on behalf of the prospective purchaser to assess veterinary factors, which may affect the horse's suitability for its intended purpose.

The process of vetting a horse or pony is to assess factors of a veterinary nature, which could prejudice the horse's suitability for its intended use. The vet acts on behalf of the purchaser and the opinion provided is tailored to the individual purchaser's needs and intended use for the horse. The P.P.E. provides an assessment of the horse at the time of the examination to help the potential purchaser make an informed decision on the purchase. Points of concern raised at the time of the P.P.E. may also have bearing on future insurance policies for the horse, and this should also be considered prior to purchasing the horse.

It is recommended that a thorough 5 stage vetting is carried out for all ridden horses however, there is the option of a 2 stage vetting should this be required.

### What happens during a vetting?

**Stage 1: Preliminary examination** - a thorough clinical examination of the horse at rest, including performing an identification sketch, checking the horse's passport and microchip.

**Stage 2: Walk and trot in-hand** - to detect abnormalities of gait and action. Flexion tests of all four limbs and lunging on a firm surface may be performed. The horse is also turned sharply in each direction and backed up for a few paces.

**Stage 3: Exercise phase** - the horse is usually ridden for this phase, but it may be conducted on a lunge if ridden exercise is not possible (e.g. an unbroken horse). This allows assessment of the horse when breathing with more effort and when the heart rate is increased.

**Stage 4: Period of rest and re-examination** - the horse is allowed to stand quietly for a period. During this time the horse's heart and lungs will be listened to again, and the horse's "recovery" from exercise is assessed.

**Stage 5: Second trot up** - the horse is trotted in-hand again to look for any signs of strains or injuries made evident by the exercise and rest stages. Flexion tests may be repeated at this stage as may assessment on a circle.

### What happens next?

Any findings and the opinion of the vet will be verbally discussed with the purchaser at the end of the examination and documented in a certificate. This is your vetting certificate and should be kept safe.



**Additional Testing / Investigation** - For several reasons, the purchaser may wish for further investigations such as radiography to be completed before a final decision is reached. Pre-movement blood testing and endoscopy for purchasers following the vetting is also an option should the purchaser decide to proceed with their purchase on the day. We also strongly advise that appropriate insurance is taken out before purchase is made.

**Blood Sample** - As part of both the 2-stage and 5-stage vetting's, a blood sample is also included. Once taken, these bloods are stored at an external laboratory for 6 months should the purchaser need to re-visit these for any reason (e.g. medication analysis during this time).