



Veterinary Council of Ireland

Premises Accreditation Scheme

Guidance for Registered Veterinary Clinics
Room/Area Requirements 2022



Premises Accreditation Scheme and Certificate of Suitability

The registration of a veterinary premises by the Veterinary Council of Ireland is certified by the issuing of a Certificate of Suitability (also referred to as "a COS").

The Veterinary Council's Premises Accreditation Scheme ("the PAS") is a mandatory scheme introduced to regulate veterinary premises in the State in accordance with Part 9 of the Veterinary Practice Amendment Act 2005 ("the Act"). Under the PAS, all veterinary premises in the State must be registered and certified by the Veterinary Council.

Through the PAS, the Veterinary Council regulates and maintains standards of veterinary premises in the State in the public interest by carrying out premises inspections and by requiring registered veterinary practitioners and registered veterinary nurses to comply with the requirements of the Scheme in their day-to-day practice.

The Minimum Room/Area Requirement

All premises registering in the Registered Veterinary Clinic ("RVC") classification in the PAS accreditation period commencing on 1 January 2022 will need to comply with the minimum room/area requirement.

From 1 January 2022, all premises in the Registered Veterinary Clinic (RVC) classification must comply with the new room/area requirements. These requirements are introduced in the public interest in line with the ongoing progression and developments in clinical practice, health and safety and biosecurity requirements, and in the interest of continued improvements in clinical outcomes.

The Council considers that the minimum rooms/areas required will further ensure that premises in the RVC classification can safely and effectively deliver the various facets of veterinary care expected of them to the highest possible standard.

Why is there a Minimum Room/Area Requirement?

In line with its function to specify and keep under review standards of veterinary practice, the Council considers that a minimum set of rooms/ areas are required to enable premises in the Registered Veterinary Clinic classification to safely and effectively deliver the various facets of veterinary care expected of them to the highest possible standard.

This requirement has been introduced to reflect the ongoing progression and developments in clinical practice, health and safety and biosecurity, seen within the Irish Veterinary Professions to date. It supports continued improvements in clinical outcomes, particularly in relation to surgical procedures, and prioritises animal welfare in the public interest.

This requirement has existed since 1 January 2018 for all newly constructed or redeveloped Registered Veterinary Clinics applying for a Certificate of Suitability, with all previously accredited premises in the Registered Veterinary Clinic classification remaining exempt during the 2018-2021 accreditation period.



Room/Area Requirements

Registered Veterinary Clinics can differ in terms of the nature of veterinary services offered at or from the premises. The practice profile represents the nature of the work carried out at the premises by indicating the percentage of companion animal, farm animal, and equine animal veterinary services carried out at or from the premises.

Registered Veterinary Clinics may have a mixed-practice profile, and may therefore be required to meet more than one set of requirements. The room/area requirements for Registered Veterinary Clinics



ROOM REQUIREMENTS: COMPANION ANIMAL CLINICS

This section applies to any RVC in the treatment of companion animals at the premises:

Office/Reception/Waiting Room

It is essential that clients can be greeted and permitted to wait in a room which separates them and their animals from private consultations, hospitalised animals, and clinical procedures. The reception and waiting area may suitably function as an office for the practice, or indeed an office may be located in a separate room. The waiting area must facilitate the separation of predator and prey species when required.

Examination Room

In order to deliver best care, Council considers that Registered Veterinary Clinics in the treatment of companion animals at the premises must facilitate the examination of an animal with an owner in private. A separate examination room enables the complete physical examination of patients in private.

Treatment/Procedure Room

Registered Veterinary Clinics in the treatment of companion animals at the premises must have the facility for treatments and procedures to take place in a designated room. This is essential in the interest of animal health and welfare, biosecurity, and so that practitioners and nurses in provision of their care can do so in the absence of excessive noise and distractions. The treatment/procedure room also enables the practice to swiftly facilitate emergencies when the examination room is in use. If surgery is carried out, there should be a dedicated area to enable safe and aseptic surgery within the treatment/procedure room, with a separate aseptic scrub area. The treatment/procedure room should have no through traffic.

Inpatient Room

In the interest of animal health and welfare, biosecurity, and public health and safety, it is essential that all Registered Veterinary Clinics in the treatment of companion animals at the premises comprise a room for safely housing hospitalised animals. This room must be suitable for housing sick and recovering animals in a safe and comfortable environment, and it must be freely accessible by practice staff at all times.

Public Toilet

In line with PAS Standard 9.6, a clean toilet, including hand-washing facilities, must be available to clients on the veterinary premises.

ROOM/AREA REQUIREMENTS: FARM ANIMAL CLINICS

This section applies to any RVC in the treatment of farm animals at the premises:

Office/Reception/Waiting Room

It is essential that clients can be greeted and permitted to wait in a room which separates them and their animals from private consultations, hospitalised animals, and clinical procedures. The reception and waiting area may suitably function as an office for the practice, or indeed an office may be located in a separate room.

Inpatient Area

In the interest of animal health and welfare, biosecurity, and public health and safety, it is essential that all Registered Veterinary Clinics comprise an area for safely housing hospitalised animals. This area must be suitable for housing sick and recovering animals in a safe and comfortable environment, and it must be freely accessible by practice staff at all times. For Registered Veterinary Clinics in the treatment of farm animals at the premises, sheltered and secure stables, compartments, or pens of adequate size are acceptable.

Examination/Treatment/Procedure Area

In order to deliver best care, Council considers that Registered Veterinary Clinics must facilitate the examination of an animal with an owner in private. A separate examination/treatment/procedure area enables the complete physical examination and/ or treatment of patients in private. For Registered Veterinary Clinics in the treatment of farm animals at the premises, a sheltered examination/treatment/procedure area with adequate space and appropriate equipment for restraint is acceptable.

A Public Toilet

In line with PAS Standard 9.6, a clean toilet, including hand-washing facilities, must be available to clients on the veterinary premises.

ROOM/AREA REQUIREMENTS: 100% EQUINE ANIMAL CLINICS

This section applies to any RVC in the treatment of equine animals at the premises:

Office/Reception/Waiting Room

It is essential that clients can be greeted and permitted to wait in a room which separates them and their animals from private consultations, hospitalised animals, and clinical procedures. The reception and waiting area may suitably function as an office for the practice, or indeed an office may be located in a separate room.

Inpatient Area

In the interest of animal health and welfare, biosecurity, and public health and safety, it is essential that all Registered Veterinary Clinics comprise an area for safely housing hospitalised animals. This area must be suitable for housing sick and recovering animals in a safe and comfortable environment, and it must be freely accessible by practice staff at all times. For Registered Veterinary Clinics in the treatment of equine animals at the premises, sheltered and secure stables, compartments, or pens of adequate size are acceptable.

Examination/Treatment/Procedure Area

In order to deliver best care, Council considers that Registered Veterinary Clinics must facilitate the examination of an animal with an owner in private. A separate examination/treatment/procedure area enables the complete physical examination and/or treatment of patients in private. For Registered Veterinary Clinics in the treatment of equine animals at the premises, a sheltered examination/treatment/procedure area with adequate space and appropriate equipment for restraint is acceptable.

A Public Toilet

In line with PAS Standard 9.6, a clean toilet, including hand-washing facilities, must be available to clients on the veterinary premises.

What RVC COS Holders need to do now:



A. If you have the minimum rooms/areas required.

If you have the minimum rooms/areas in place which meet the requirements detailed above, you should apply to renew your COS from 1 January 2022 when invited to do so. You will be asked to submit a detailed map and floor plan of your premises to the Council as part of your COS renewal application. You will also be asked to declare compliance with this minimum room/area requirement.

B. If you do not have the minimum rooms/areas required, and will not meet this requirement by 1 January 2022.

Certificate of Suitability holders whose premises will not be in compliance with the room/area requirement will be permitted to change the classification of the premises to a Registered Veterinary Office. This change in classification will need to take place before you renew your COS on 1 January 2022, and will be subject to a premises inspection taking place. **It is important to note however that the treatment of animals is not permitted at a Registered Veterinary Office,** except for emergency treatment in an exceptional case. If you intend to change the classification of your premises, you are kindly asked to inform us in advance by contacting us on 01 6684402 or by email at pas@vci.ie.

C. If you do not have the minimum rooms/areas required, but intend to meet this requirement by 1 January 2022.

Certificate of Suitability holders whose premises is not currently in compliance with the room/area requirement, but who intend on ensuring compliance by 1 January 2022, may wish to seek further assistance, guidance or further information from this office. Please contact us now discuss your circumstances if this is the case.

Please contact the VCI for assistance

The Council recognises the significant investments by Registrants of their time and money to date in order to meet the requirements of the Premises Accreditation Scheme, and it is hoped that this high level of engagement will continue.

The Council further acknowledges the importance of upholding the standards of registered veterinary premises in Ireland, and of ensuring that the requirements of the Premises Accreditation Scheme safeguard and remain reflective of current and best practice in the interest of animal health and welfare.

While we acknowledge that many Registered Veterinary Clinics will already exceed the minimum requirements expected, the Council highlights its commitment to ensuring continued improvement of standards of veterinary practice in the State, for animal health and welfare and in the public interest.

If you foresee that you will have difficulty ensuring your compliance with the minimum room/area requirement coming into effect in respect of Registered Veterinary Clinics in 2022, please contact the VCI offices by phone on 01 6684402 or by email to pas@vci.ie, in early course, and we will be happy to assist you with any concerns or queries you might have.



Veterinary Council of Ireland

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