

News story: VMD's Accredited Internet Retailer Scheme (AIRS) 5th Anniversary

The VMD's Accredited Internet Retailer Scheme (AIRS) has now been running for 5 years since its launch on 25 May 2012.

AIRS was developed in response to the general public's concerns about buying veterinary medicines over the internet. The aim of the scheme is to provide assurance to the public and professional keepers of animals, that by purchasing their veterinary medicines from an accredited internet retailer they are:

- buying the medicines from a reputable, UK-based retailer
- at less risk of buying unauthorised, inappropriate or ineffective medicines for their animals
- confident that the retailer meets the requirements of the Scheme and the law

There are now 41 accredited websites operated by 32 businesses and further applications are in the pipeline. Companies whose websites have been accredited are diverse and include some well-known organisations.

An [up to date list of accredited retailers](#) is available.

We have worked closely with retailers to explain the assessment criteria and what changes they need to make to their websites for compliance with both AIRS and the Veterinary Medicines Regulations. Whilst doing this, the VMD has built some very good working relationships with retailers and has gained a better understanding about how internet businesses operate. We have used this information to develop our guidance and to help applicants understand how to meet the accreditation standards.

With the aims of the scheme in mind, we reviewed its requirements in 2016 and made a number of changes, in particular:

- Accreditation is now focussed on the retail supply of authorised veterinary medicines (classes POM-V, POM-VPS and NFA-VPS) only
- Non-medicinal products are no longer included in the assessment. Instead, applicants have to declare that they do not make medicinal claims for non-medicinal products on their websites
- Applicants have to acknowledge that continued accreditation is contingent on a commitment to promptly correct all non-compliances brought to their attention

We believe that these changes have simplified the accreditation process whilst maintaining the appropriate controls on the sale of medicines by internet retailers.

AIRS is open to all UK-based registered veterinary practice premises, registered pharmacies and approved SQP retailers that supply POM-V, POM-VPS

and NFA-VPS veterinary medicines online. Membership is voluntary and its free.

Retailers who meet the accreditation criteria display the special 'VMD Accredited Retailer' logo with their unique accreditation number [image of logo]

If you wish to apply to become an AIRS member, [application forms and other guidance is available](#)