

Pet Parent Research Report

How pet parents view and
value technology in vet care



About this report

Vetstoria commissioned 7Insights to carry out a survey of 2,000 pet parents in the UK and Australia about the importance of technology as part of the client experience.

We explored expectations around communication and interactions with veterinary clinics, including digital services and websites. We also asked about overall levels of satisfaction with vet practices and likelihood to change vet.

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Executive Summary and Highlights

Consumers are increasingly reliant on technology to organise and simplify their busy lives, and pet parents are no different. They expect to communicate and engage with their veterinary clinics online via their phones and other devices.

They typically want technology to help them book appointments and summarise follow-up actions, access their pets' health records, and receive timely reminders about visits and vaccinations.

They also expect user-friendly websites and digital tools to help them with a range of other use cases, whether dealing with paperwork digitally in advance of appointments, paying with their phones, or requesting prescription refills online.

Vetstoria commissioned a survey of 2,000 pet parents in the UK and Australia to better understand preferences around communication with their veterinary practices, the importance of digital solutions, and their current levels of satisfaction with their clinics.

Across both markets the research has revealed a significant gap between the expectations of pet owners of all ages for frictionless interactions, and the technology actually provided by their clinics.

This shortfall in customer service is most evident among younger pet owners, and it is these clients who are least satisfied with their veterinary clinics and most likely to be considering a change of practice in the year ahead.

The report explores in more detail why vet clinics should focus on using better technology to improve the client experience across all demographics, or risk losing pet parents to practices with better digital solutions.

Highlights from this research include:



Most pet parents consider digital communication and engagement with their vet clinics to be important in areas such as **booking of appointments, follow-up summaries, reminder messages, and accessing or sharing of pet health records.**



More than half (58%) of pet parents report **issues booking appointments**, increasing to 73% for 18–34 year-olds and 66% for those living in urban areas.



Pet parents point to a range of issues when trying to book appointments such as **lack of available slots (47%), long hold times (41%), inability to book online (34%)** and also being **unable to book when the clinic is closed (32%)**.



Those who have experienced difficulty booking appointments are less satisfied with their vet clinics, and almost **three times more likely to be considering a change of vet.**



Over a third (35%) of pet parents say **they are likely to change their vet clinic in the next year**, and this rises to 48% for 18–34 year-olds and 37% for 35–54 year-olds.

SECTION 1

Introduction – Why Technology's Role for Vets and Pet Parents is Growing

A range of economic, demographic and technological factors is making it more important than ever for veterinary practices across the world to ensure that they are communicating and interacting with pet parents as effectively as possible.

This international report focuses on the UK and Australia. However, many of the themes and insights are likely to be relevant across other developed veterinary markets, including those in the European Union. The findings in this research are also consistent with a similar 2025 study carried out in the US¹.

While pet ownership soared to record highs during the pandemic (with 51% of UK adults² and 69% of Australian households³ owning a pet), spending patterns have since become more unpredictable.

Many practices are contending with the end of the initial 'puppy boom' of high-frequency inoculations and check-ups, putting pressure on sustained revenue growth. For example, veterinary visits in the UK decreased by 2.1% in 2024 year-on-year, according to IDEXX⁴. In addition to this, consumer concerns regarding inflation, the cost of living and economic uncertainty are all influencing pet parent behaviour.

The RSPCA reported in 2025 that almost half of UK pet owners are worried about affording their pet bills, leading some to cut back on insurance or switch pet food⁵. This comes at a time when the UK's Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA) has proposed major reforms⁶ for the veterinary sector including a price cap for written prescriptions.

The rise of the 'digital native' pet parent

Pet ownership trends across the globe have also been reshaped by modern working practices, with the rise of remote and hybrid working. This initial flexibility allowed a profound demographic shift towards younger pet parents. In the UK, for example, almost six in 10 (59%) of new owners who acquired a pet during the pandemic were aged 16–34⁷. And in the United States, Millennials (those aged 29–44) now make up the single largest pet-owning generation⁸.

As the global trend of employers mandating a return to physical workplaces accelerates, these new owners are now particularly time-poor, raising the stakes for convenience, seamless interactions and flexible communication with their chosen veterinary practice.

The 2026 client loyalty challenge

All combined, 2026 has the potential to be a year of significant client turnover for veterinary practices globally. This is in part due to the gap between the technology clients prefer and the services they actually receive. As we will see from the research, more than a third of pet parents (35%) are likely to change veterinarians within the next year, and this propensity to change practices applies particularly to the younger and more urban pet parents who most highly value digital engagement and communications.

For veterinary practices across the UK, Australia, and beyond, embracing integrated digital communication solutions — from online booking to professional websites — is no longer a competitive advantage, it is a necessity for maintaining loyal customers.

1 <https://petdesk.com/pet-parent-research-report/>

2 <https://www.avma.org/news/less-foot-traffic-veterinary-practices-spells-declining-revenue>

3 <https://www.australiandoglover.com/2022/11/pets-in-australia-survey-2022-released.html>

4 <https://www.mordorintelligence.com/industry-reports/united-kingdom-veterinary-healthcare-market-industry>

5 <https://www.vettimes.com/news/business/finance/owners-vet-bill-worries-still-high-rspcas-animal-kindness-report>

6 <https://competitionandmarkets.blog.gov.uk/2025/06/10/addressing-concerns-in-the-veterinary-sector/>

7 <https://www.ukpetfood.org/resource/pfma-releases-latest-pet-population-data.html>

8 <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/pet-insurance/pet-ownership-statistics/>

SECTION 2

Frictionless Interactions and Convenience in High Demand

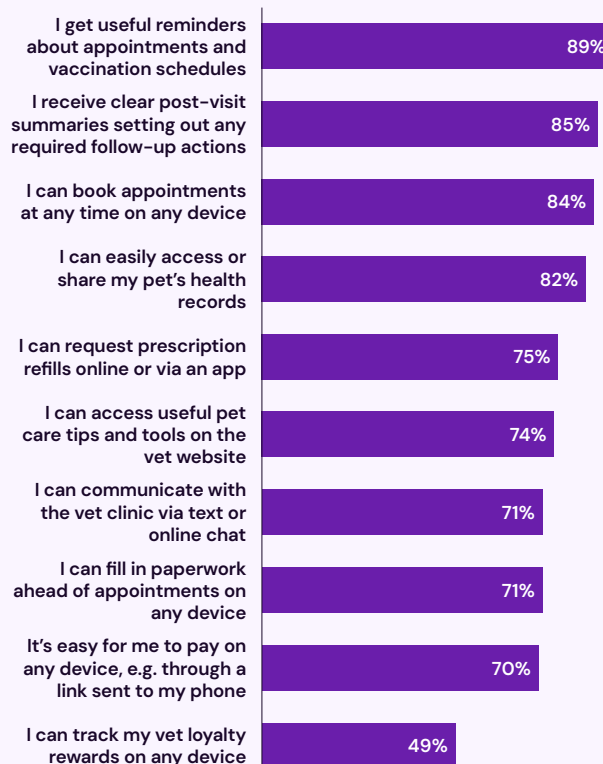
Modern consumers have become reliant on digital technology to run their busy lives, and pet parents are no different. They expect to engage with and communicate with their veterinary clinics online and via their phones. When surveyed about the importance of different aspects of vet clinic customer service, the pet-owning public's priorities are very clear (*Figure 1*).

The vast majority see digital interaction as a simple and convenient way to get appointment and vaccination reminders, book consultations, receive post-appointment summaries, and to access or share a pet's medical records. Increasingly, among other digital services, pet owners also want to be able to request prescription refills online and access useful information on the vet's website.

This expectation for flexible and easy digital options to interact with a clinic clearly extends beyond convenience to receiving a frictionless service. Clients want to be able to communicate with a practice staff member digitally, especially when there is no need for an in-depth phone call. They also want to cut their wait times when visiting a practice by filling out paperwork online ahead of an appointment and then paying through their phone digitally, just as they would with any other everyday purchase.

FIGURE 1

Proportion of pet parents describing aspects of customer service as 'important' when interacting with their veterinary clinic



More than eight out of 10 pet parents consider digital communication and engagement with their vet clinics to be 'important' for reminders, post-visit follow-ups, booking appointments, and accessing or sharing pet health records.



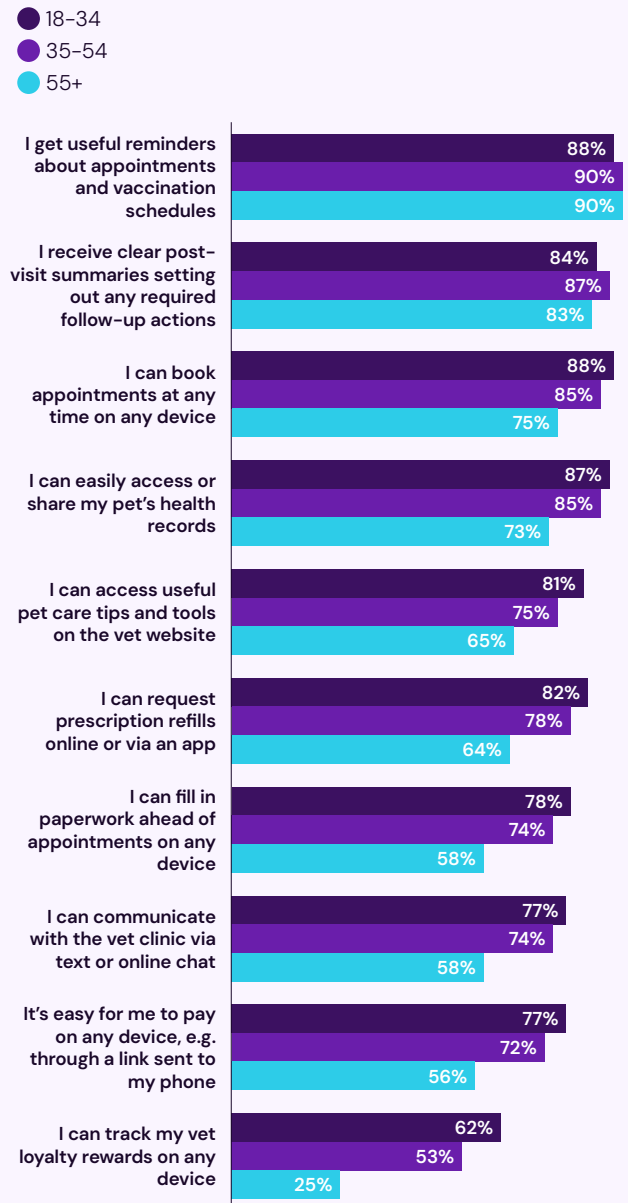
The value of digital engagement is already high – and it's still growing

While the levels of importance attached to different digital services are very similar in both the UK and Australia, there are more pronounced differences when the results are broken down by age of pet parent. All age groups consider digitally enabled communications and interactions with their vet clinics as important, especially for reminders and appointment summaries. But while pet owners of all ages ascribe similar levels of importance to digital reminders and follow-up appointment summaries, it is the younger pet parents who most value the convenience of technology in all other areas, for example booking and paying for treatment, as well as handling the associated paperwork (*Figure 2*).



FIGURE 2

Proportion of pet parents describing aspects of customer service as 'important' when interacting with their veterinary clinic (by age)



While pet parents aged 55 and above have softer preferences for digital-powered communications and services offered by vet clinics compared to younger generations, most respondents aged 55+ regard nearly all of these technology use cases as important.

SECTION 3

Why a Strong Online Presence is No Longer just a Nice-to-Have

A modern and user-friendly website has become a necessity for vet clinics rather than just an optional extra. Our research has found that 83% of pet parents consider a practice website to be important for their vet selection process, with similarly high percentages in both the UK (84%) and Australia (81%). More than a third (36%) of pet parents regard a poor website as a deal-breaker (*Figure 3*), a figure which increases to 47% for under-35s.

From the vet clinic perspective, a high-quality professional website is important for building credibility and trust, and also for being as visible as possible in the search engine results pages. From a practical perspective, a modern website can also save time for vet clinics by making it easier for staff to update and manage content and for the practice to take bookings digitally 24/7.

Figure 4 shows a range of issues for people using vet clinic websites, including hard-to-find (48%) and outdated information (41%). Consumers can also face problems with websites that don't load properly (39%), an inability to book appointments online (38%) and lack of clarity on who might be attending to their pets' needs (30%). Significant numbers of pet parents are also being left frustrated by confusing or broken buttons and links (28%) and websites which don't work properly when accessed by smartphones (also 28%).

29%

Almost a third of pet parents have decided against a particular vet clinic because of its website.

FIGURE 3

When looking for a new vet, how important is the quality of the practice's website in your decision-making?

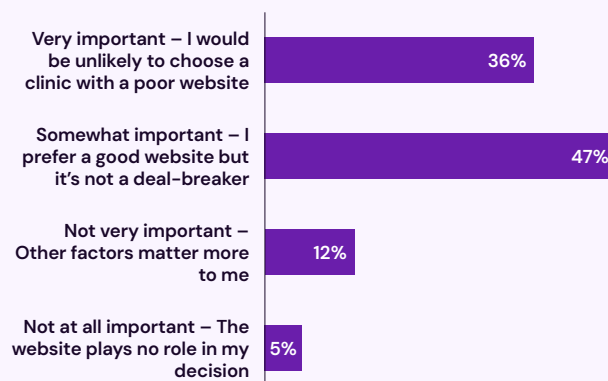
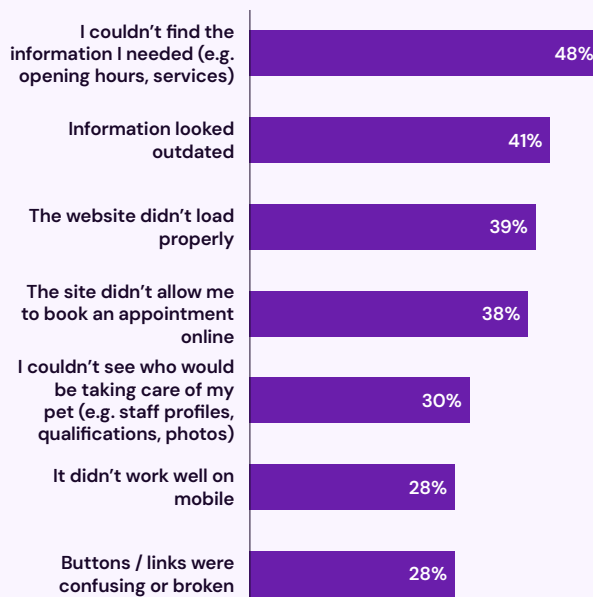


FIGURE 4

If you were to leave or avoid a veterinary practice's website, which of the following reasons would be most likely?

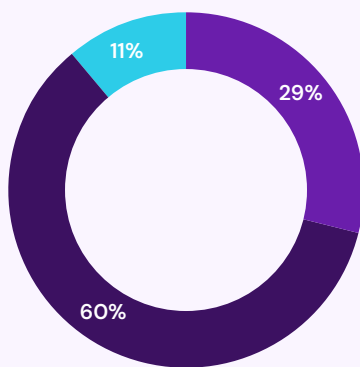


The commercial risk of a poor website is laid bare in *Figure 5* which shows that almost a third of pet parents (29%) have decided against a particular vet clinic because of its website.

FIGURE 5

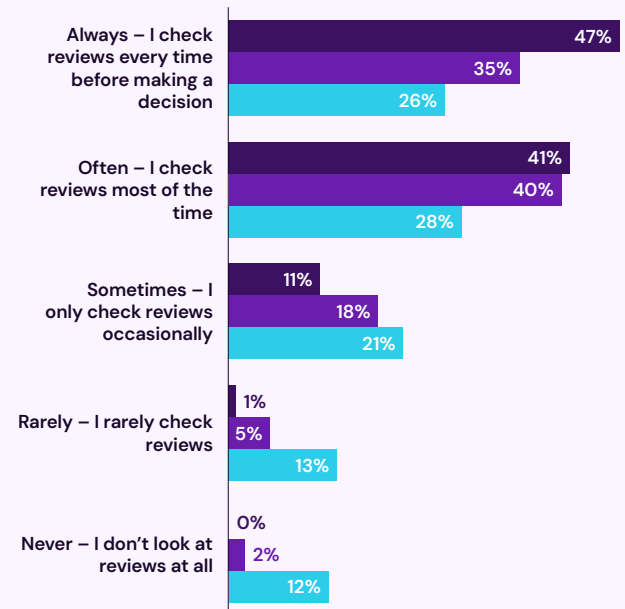
Have you ever chosen not to contact or register with a veterinary clinic because of its website?

- Yes – I've decided against a clinic due to its website
- No – I've never ruled out a clinic because of its website
- I don't remember / not sure

**FIGURE 6**

How likely are you to read online reviews before choosing or switching veterinary clinics? (by age)

- 18-34
- 35-54
- 55+



The importance of reviews

This research also underscores the importance of positive online reviews for vet clinics looking to acquire and retain new customers, particularly younger pet parents.

Eighty-eight percent of pet parents under 35 'always' (47%) or 'often' (41%) check reviews before choosing or switching vet clinics (*Figure 6*).

The desire to check reviews is prevalent in both the UK and Australia where, respectively, 75% and 72% of pet owners either always or often check reviews about vet practices as part of the decision-making process.

The importance of this kind of 'social proof' is highlighted by *Figure 7* which shows that online reviews (31%) are the second likeliest reason for the selection of a particular vet after recommendation from someone they know (49%). And while around half of pet parents from all age groups rely on recommendations from friends and family, those aged under 35 are two-and-a-half times as likely as those aged 55 or over to have chosen their current vet based on online reviews (42% vs. 17%).

FIGURE 7

How did you choose your current vet?



SECTION 4

Why the Satisfaction Gap is an Early Signal of Future Risk

There is growing evidence of a gap between pet parent expectations and the quality of digital engagement supported by vet clinics, and that diminishing client loyalty among younger generations in particular is a commercial risk.

While an extremely low percentage of pet parents are fundamentally dissatisfied with their vet clinics at an overall level (*Figure 8*), it is evident from this research and our similar US study that less than half of younger pet parents are 'very satisfied' with the service they are receiving. Those aged under 55 are more likely to be only 'mainly satisfied', a categorisation that does not suggest unwavering commitment and loyalty to their current vet.

Part of the reason for this lack of complete satisfaction relates to the inability to interact with a veterinary clinic digitally. We have seen that digital communications and engagement are important across all age groups, but they are particularly sought after by younger pet parents who are the most likely to value frictionless interactions such as the ability to complete paperwork and pay via a link sent to their smartphones.

Pet parents are also experiencing widespread issues booking appointments, with 58% of pet parents reporting issues when they try to do this (*Figure 9*).

The situation is worse when we drill down into younger age groups where almost three-quarters of 18–34 year-olds (73%) have had appointment booking issues (*Figure 10*).

Another finding from the research is that urban pet owners are 18 percentage points more likely to have had difficulties booking an appointment than rural pet owners (*Figure 11*).

When you consider that younger and more urban groups of owners typically put more of a premium on their time due to busier lifestyles, it is less of a surprise to see how issues with booking appointments could lead to the lower levels of satisfaction and customer loyalty revealed later in the report.

FIGURE 8

How would you rate your level of satisfaction with your veterinary clinic? (by age)

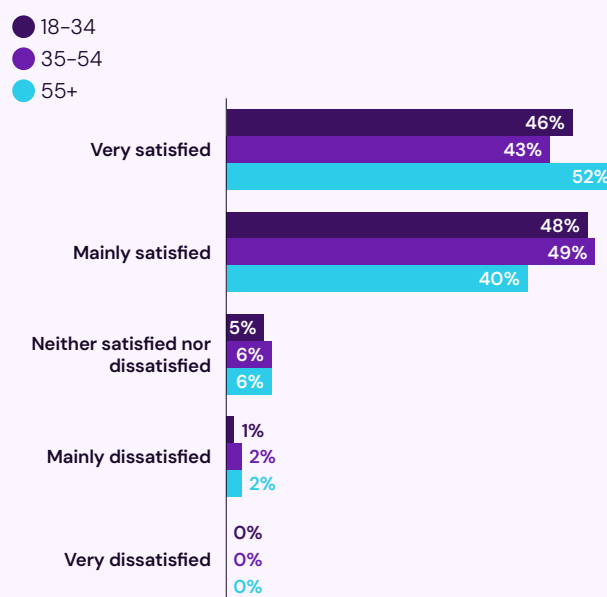
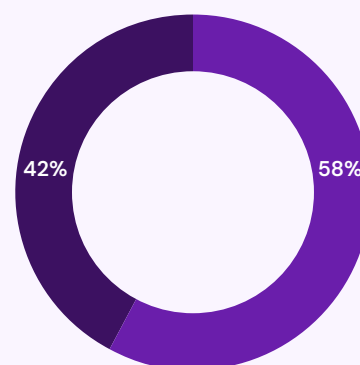


FIGURE 9

Have you experienced any issues when booking an appointment with your vet clinic?

Yes No



Issues booking appointments

Pet parents point to a range of issues when trying to book appointments such as a lack of available slots, long hold times, the inability to book online and the inability to book when the clinic is closed.

An all-too-familiar problem for pet parents is waiting for too long on a call, only to then find out there is no slot available at a preferred time. *Figure 12* shows that almost half (47%) of pet owners have had issues due to a lack of available appointment slots, and 41% have waited for too long on a call.

While hanging on the line without a positive outcome is understandably the most frustrating issue for pet owners seeking to book appointments, a third (34%) of those experiencing issues call out the lack of an online booking option as a problem. We have already seen that many pet parents like the option of booking appointments online and being able to 'chat' with a practice on live chat, email and text (*Figure 1*).

FIGURE 10

Proportion of pet parents experiencing issues when booking an appointment (by age)

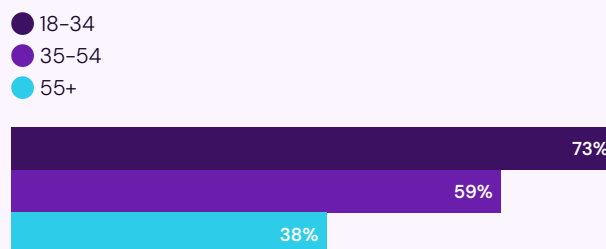


FIGURE 11

Proportion of pet parents experiencing issues when booking an appointment (by location)

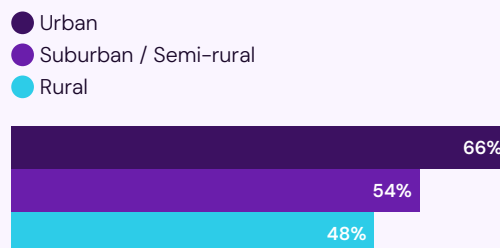
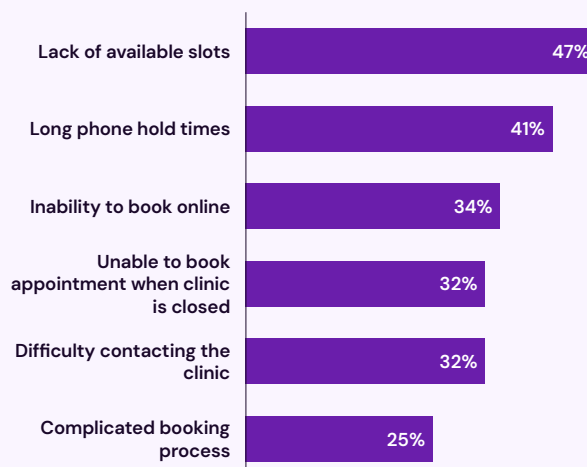


FIGURE 12

What issues have you had when booking an appointment with your vet clinic?



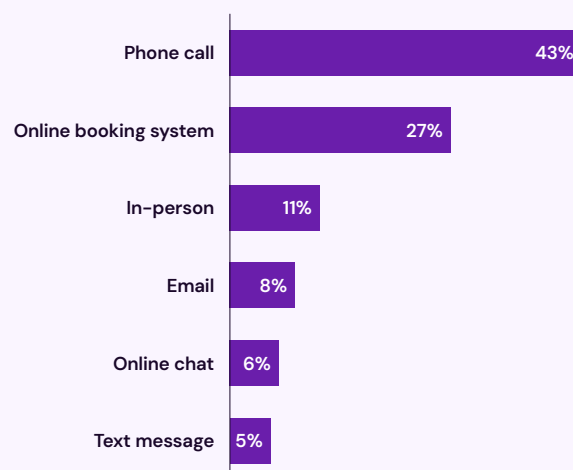
This does not mean people only want to interact online. Many pet owners like the option of calling their veterinary clinic to make an appointment. It makes sense when UK research shows that almost three-quarters (73%) of pet owners surveyed said they view their pet as one of their best friends, and more than half (53%) considered their pet as one of their children⁹. That means when they are concerned, they want the reassurance of discussing issues live with a trained professional.

However, when much of the communication between a clinic and pet owners is centred around non-urgent care needs, it is clear that pet owners want to be able to interact digitally. This frees up customer service staff to answer calls more quickly and devote more time to providing excellent customer service outcomes when interacting face-to-face with pet parents.

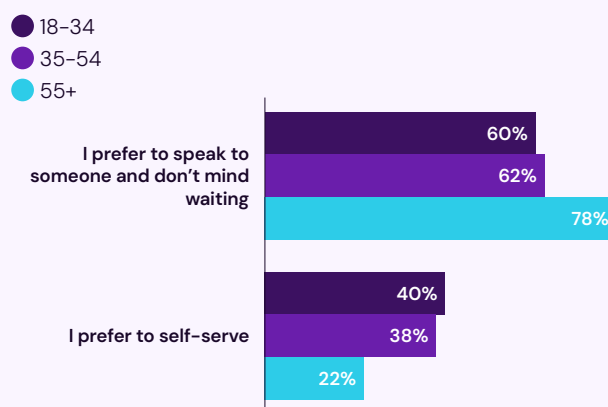
Figure 13 shows that only a minority (43%) typically prefer to call a vet clinic for a non-urgent appointment, with significant numbers of pet owners preferring to self-serve (Figure 14). More than a quarter of pet owners (27%) say their preferred way of booking a non-urgent appointment is an online booking system. The results are again similar for both UK and Australia, though there is even more appetite for online booking systems in Australia (29%) than the UK (26%).

FIGURE 13

How do you typically prefer to book your non-urgent vet clinic appointments? (e.g. routine check-ups, nail-trims etc.)

**FIGURE 14**

What best describes your preferred method of contact with the vet clinic for non-urgent bookings, information and payment? (By age)



9 <https://www.purina.co.uk/news/pets/family-members-data-study>

SECTION 5

Avoiding a Year of Client Churn

At a time of almost peak pet ownership, digitally native Gen Z and Millennials now make up a growing share of the market.

This means the desire for digital solutions has never been higher, so veterinarians need to be aware of the looming customer experience gap between expectations and service delivery.

The end result is that, across all age groups and locations, 35% of pet parents tell us they are 'likely' to change their veterinarian this year (*Figure 15*).

This rises to 48% for 18–34 year-olds and 37% for 35–54 year-olds (*Figure 16*). In urban areas 48% are likely to switch, compared to 23% of rural pet parents (*Figure 17*). The possibility of leaving a practice is evident in all age groups, but it is far higher among younger customers and urban owners who likely have a wider choice of nearby veterinarians. There could, of course, be other reasons for switching, such as cost or people moving to different locations.

FIGURE 15

Are you likely to change vet within the next year?

● Yes ● No

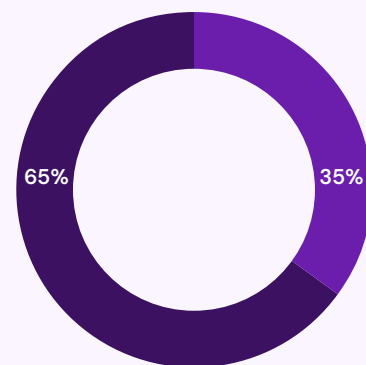


FIGURE 16

Proportion of pet parents likely to change vet within the next year (by age)

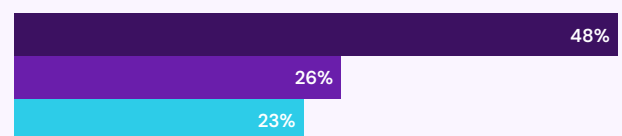
● 18–34
● 35–54
● 55+



FIGURE 17

Proportion of pet parents likely to change vet within the next year (by location)

● Urban
● Suburban / Semi-rural
● Rural



3x

Pet parents aged under 35 are more than three-and-a-half times as likely as those aged 55 and over to say they're likely to change their vet within the next 12 months.

2x

Urban pet parents are almost twice as likely as rural pet parents to say they're likely to change vet in the next 12 months.

How poor customer service is driving dissatisfaction and client churn

The importance of seamless services is illustrated by the correlation between satisfaction with a vet clinic and the ease with which pet parents can book appointments (*Figure 18*).

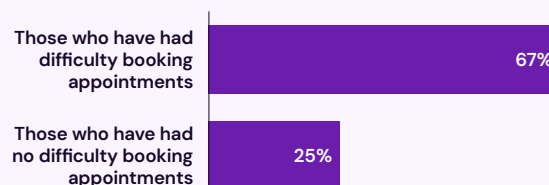
Only 38% of those who have had issues booking appointments are 'very satisfied' with their vet clinic, compared to 49% of those who haven't experienced any difficulties. Even more tellingly, those who have experienced difficulties booking appointments are almost three times more likely to be considering a change of vet in the next year (67% vs. 25%, *Figure 19*).

FIGURE 18

Proportion of pet parents who are 'very satisfied' with their veterinary clinic.

**FIGURE 19**

Proportion of pet parents likely to change vet within the next year



Those who haven't experienced any issues booking appointments are 29% more likely to be very satisfied with their vet clinic. And those who have had difficulty making appointments are almost three times more likely to be considering a change of vet.

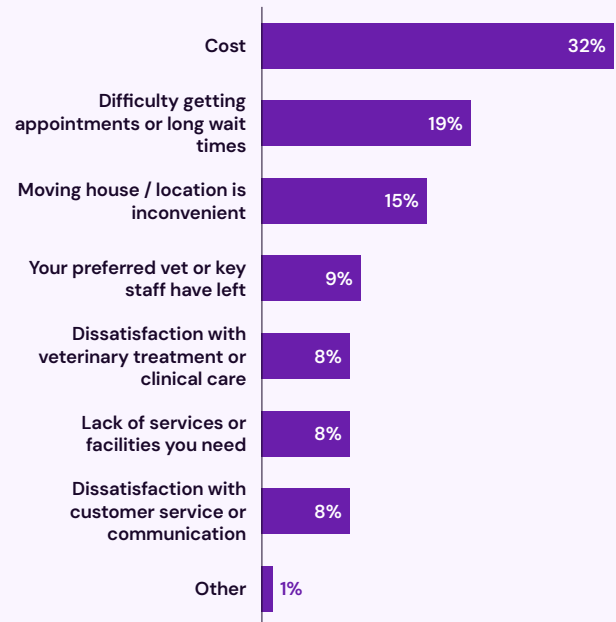
Our research further shows that the reason for switching is far more likely to be due to poor customer service than a bad experience with actual vet treatment. Only 8% of pet owners point to dissatisfaction with vet treatment and clinical care as the principal reason for a potential switch of practice (Figure 20).

This compares to almost a fifth of pet parents (19%) thinking of changing vets because of difficulty getting appointments or long wait times, making this the single biggest driver of switching aside from cost (32%). Another 8% of pet parents point to more general dissatisfaction with customer service and communication, further underscoring the importance of improved services, communications and experiences powered by technology to reduce customer churn.

Aside from cost, difficulty getting appointments or long wait times are the biggest drivers of switching vet clinics.

FIGURE 20

What is the main reason you might change your vet within the next year?



SECTION 6

Trust and Technology are a Winning Combination

While technology-powered services that deliver exceptional customer outcomes should be the goal of every customer-focused veterinary clinic, they are still not as important as trust. A frictionless, convenient digital service is attractive for pet owners but few people will choose pet care based solely on technology. Though a professional website and online reviews have been shown to build credibility and trust, it is the combination of streamlined technology and exceptional pet care that makes for a winning combination.

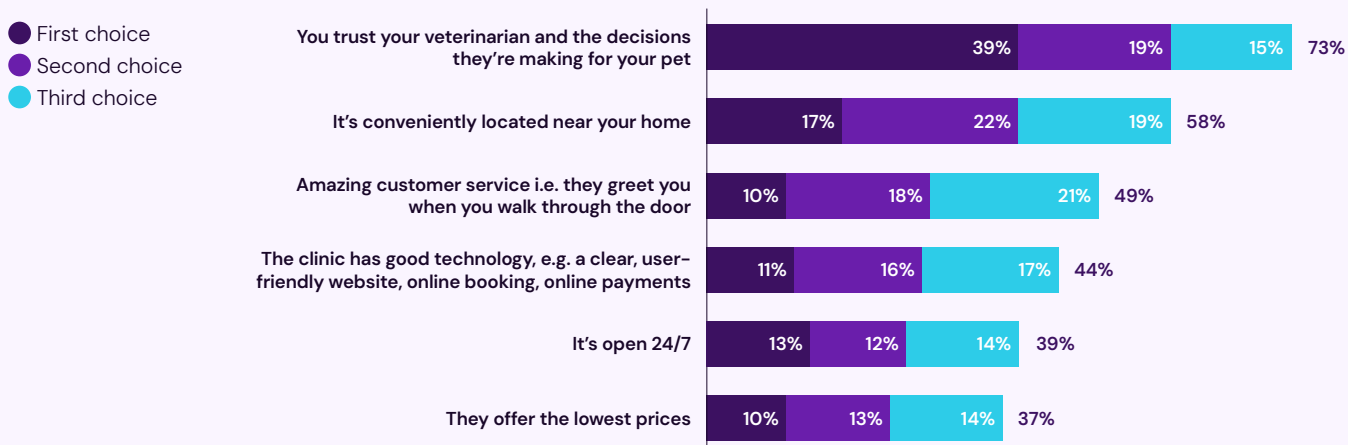
This is clear from our research. Trust is the most important factor for choosing a practice, followed by location and customer service. Digital technology is important to people, but the biggest factor is knowing a veterinarian will take care of a pet (*Figure 21*).

It is evident that veterinarians must be trustworthy, and their practices should provide a warm and welcoming environment. Our research shows that this is almost universally the case, with very low levels of dissatisfaction with vet clinics. Despite this, more than one in three owners (35%) are considering a switch in practice, so it is clear many are prepared to entrust the health of their animals to a new vet clinic.

We have seen that convenient, low-friction experiences offered by digital technology are proving attractive to those considering a change to another practice. The quality of service, support and technology is crucial for retaining increasingly price-sensitive clients, and also for winning customers who are new to pet parenting or looking to change practice.

FIGURE 21

Ranking of factors in order of importance when choosing a veterinary practice



Pet parents are more likely to rank good technology as a top-three factor (44%) over 24/7 opening hours (39%) and low pricing (37%) in their choice of vet, though all these requirements are outweighed by their trust in their pet's veterinarian and the convenience of location.

Conclusion – Building Trust and Loyalty in an Uncertain Era

With pet ownership close to an all-time high, the veterinary industry faces mounting pressure to demonstrate value as spending certainty declines. The strategic focus must shift to client retention with a frictionless and convenient service model that truly works for pet parents.

From the very first touch point, whether it's a professional website or easy-to-find online reviews, it's imperative that clinics establish trust with prospective clients.

For high-touch interactions, such as a worried customer calling the clinic, staff must be freed from administrative burden. Digital tools enable this by handling routine tasks, allowing staff at vet clinics to answer the phone quickly and deliver the kind of personalised service that builds trust. Better websites with easily accessible information reduce the need for clients to call their vet clinic, while instilling trust for prospective customers.

Digital as the default for routine services

Digital technology is the clear answer for managing routine, non-emergency interactions. Booking standard appointments, requesting prescription refills, completing pre-visit paperwork, and settling bills should all be possible instantly via the client's preferred device.

Beyond simple convenience, these solutions elevate the pet parent experience by providing essential reminders, post-visit appointment summaries and quick responses to non-emergency inquiries via text.

Addressing the client churn risk

Veterinarians have observed the demographic shift, and our research confirms the urgency: a powerful contingent of tech-savvy customers — particularly younger pet parents — are demanding a new service standard. This group is driving the market momentum, making it vital to meet their expectations.

The message from both this international survey and our previous US-focused 2025 research is decisive: one-third of pet parents, and significantly more among younger and urban owners, are likely to switch vets in the coming year.

To ensure their continued success, modern veterinary practices must proactively embrace digital solutions, providing the seamless experience clients are actively seeking. Those who fail to evolve their client journey risk being viewed as outdated and losing valuable pet parents to more modern, digitally-enabled competitors.



Methodology

Vetstoria commissioned 7Insights to carry out a survey of 2,000 pet parents in October 2025. This sample included 1,000 nationally-representative respondents in the UK and 1,000 in Australia.

About Vetstoria

Vetstoria is the go-to platform for veterinary practices looking to grow online and convert clicks into clients. Founded by vets, Vetstoria combines real-world veterinary insight with powerful digital tools; and is trusted by over 8,500 clinics to book more than 800,000 appointments every month. Its real-time online booking platform lets pet owners schedule appointments anytime, anywhere, on any device, while giving clinics the most customisable booking experience on the market. Beyond booking, Vetstoria has built thousands of best-practice veterinary websites that drive visibility, engagement, and growth, helping clinics take control of their digital presence and deliver a seamless client experience from the first click to the clinic visit.

<https://www.vetstoria.com/>

About 7Insights

We work with B2B marketing teams to create high-impact content that drives engagement, enables sales, and scales through partners.

<https://7insights.io/>



**Schedule a demo
to learn how
to modernise
technology in
your clinic.**

