

THE DSPCA & THE IRISH BLUE CROSS REGISTERED CHARITY UNIT		
STANDARDS WITH GUIDELINES		
No.	STANDARD	RATIONALE

BACKGROUND

The Veterinary Council of Ireland has introduced high standards for fixed premises and does not want to jeopardise this preferred method of service delivery to the public. However, the Council is regulating the long established, existing mobile units operated by these two charities.

This is an exceptional derogation specifically aimed at facilitating the existing three charity mobile units in operation by the Irish Blue Cross and the existing one charity mobile unit in operation by the DSPCA, which were in existence prior to the establishment of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005. No other service or service provider shall be considered under this derogation.

DEFINITION

A DSPCA or Irish Blue Cross Registered Charity Unit is an appropriately equipped mobile unit, registered with the Veterinary Council of Ireland at which, one or more registered veterinary practitioners practise veterinary medicine.

A Registered Charity Unit for the DSPCA or the Irish Blue Cross must:-

1. Be associated with a Registered Veterinary Clinic (RVC) or a Registered Veterinary Hospital (RVH).
2. Have a separate Certificate of Suitability for each unit and for each location. Each nominated location where the vehicle is parked to offer veterinary services or acts of veterinary medicine, must be a suitable location regarding public access, health and safety and biosecurity and must be inspected by an authorised officer.
3. Submit a schedule of locations, consultation days and hours of attendance to the Council and notify the Council of any proposed changes to these parameters.
4. Restrict the veterinary services and acts of veterinary medicine that are provided from the unit to first aid, minor examinations and procedures, vaccinations and microchipping.
5. Restrict the veterinary services to those clients of verifiable limited means, who can honestly demonstrate that they do not have the means nor the wherewithal to attend a fixed registered premises. All others shall be directed to a RVC or RVH elsewhere. The DSPCA and the Irish Blue Cross shall ensure that this requirement is strictly observed at all times and verifiable evidence of compliance must be available to Council on request.
6. Ensure that the attending veterinary practitioner has established that the patient has a realistic option of aftercare and emergency cover when the unit is moved on from the location. This must be verified by the veterinary practitioner working from the unit *before* carrying out any veterinary service or act of veterinary medicine at the location. This does not preclude the emergency treatment of animals presented at the unit.

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1 - EQUIPMENT & SERVICES		MANDATORY MINIMUM REQUIREMENT
1.1	All Registered Veterinary Practitioners must provide a 24 hour emergency service to their clients in compliance with the Code of Professional Conduct. Emergency out of hours cover must be arranged with the associated or other RVC or RVH within a reasonable distance and clients must be made aware of such an arrangement either before or when seeking Registered Practitioner assistance. Documentary evidence of such an arrangement must be available and may be requested by an Authorised Officer.	<i>The public can have access to emergency veterinary care at all times</i>
1.2	The equipment required for the procedures performed must be stored in a safe, secure location not accessible to the public. All equipment must be routinely serviced, as required by manufacturers, and records of such services maintained for inspection.	<i>Registered persons require certain items of equipment to carry out their work. Equipment must be properly maintained to ensure its effectiveness. Veterinary equipment can also be hazardous if accessible to and/or used by untrained individuals.</i>
1.3	Diagnostic laboratory and clinical pathology services.	<i>Not applicable (N/A)</i>
1.4	Arrangements for radiographic services must be made at the associated RVC or RVH or at another veterinary premises within a reasonable distance	<i>Radiography is an integral diagnostic modality in veterinary medicine and should be available to all patients even if not provided at the premises</i>
1.5	Signs must be kept in good repair. Consultation days and hours of attendance must be clearly visible, as well as telephone numbers to contact outside these hours. Telephone numbers for emergency cover must also be made available.	<i>The public can have access to veterinary care at all times</i>
Records which may be requested by Authorised Officers under this Standard include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment service records • Arrangements for x-ray services • Arrangements for 24-hour cover 		
2 - RECORDS		MANDATORY MINIMUM REQUIREMENT
2.1	An efficient system of recording, filing and retrieving patient records must be maintained for each animal appropriate to the facility, the equipment and the services provided, with due regard to confidentiality. Records should indicate the person responsible for carrying out the procedure or service. Records may be in written or electronic format and a satisfactory back-up system should be maintained. Records should be kept for at least 7 years. Authorised Officers may ask to inspect one or more animal records.	<i>Properly maintained clinical records allow prompt and effective treatment of animals and allow continuity of care within and between practices.</i>

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	Records should include dated examination findings, dated diagnostic test findings, all treatments, anaesthetics and surgeries, and relevant communications with clients. Records must be promptly made available to clients on request.	
2.2	If the practice operates from more than one premises, the clinical records system must be accessible from each premises.	<i>This is in the interests of animal welfare and appropriate veterinary care.</i>
Records which may be requested by Authorised Officers under this Standard include, but are not limited to:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one or more animal records 		
3 - HEALTH & SAFETY		
MANDATORY MINIMUM REQUIREMENT		
3.1	A practice Safety Statement must be available and must reflect the scope of work and species seen at or from the premises.	<i>This is a legal requirement under Health & Safety legislation.</i>
3.2	A sufficient number of working smoke detectors and readily accessible, serviced fire extinguishers must be provided.	<i>This is in the interests of staff, client and patient safety.</i>
3.3	An emergency first aid box and accident record book must be available and properly maintained.	<i>This is in the interests of staff and client safety.</i>
3.4	Pressurised gas cylinders, where present, must be securely stored.	<i>This is in the interests of staff, client and patient safety.</i>
3.5	Non-clinical waste must be collected separately from other waste, stored hygienically and disposed of in an appropriate manner.	<i>This is in the interests of staff, client and patient health and safety.</i>
3.6	Clinical waste and anatomical waste must be collected separately from other waste, stored hygienically and disposed of in an appropriate manner by a registered contractor.	<i>This is in the interests of staff, client and patient health and safety.</i>
3.7	Pharmaceutical waste must be collected separately from other waste, stored hygienically and disposed of in an appropriate manner by a registered contractor.	<i>This is in the interests of staff, client and patient health and safety.</i>
3.8	Hazardous waste	<i>Not applicable (N/A)</i>
3.9	Sharps must be placed directly in an approved container and disposed of in an appropriate manner by a registered contractor.	<i>This is in the interests of staff, client and patient health and safety.</i>
3.10	Staff Facilities	<i>Not applicable (N/A)</i>
Records which may be requested by Authorised Officers under this Standard include, but are not limited to:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice Safety Statement • Accident Record Book • Contract with Waste Disposal Provider (non-clinical waste) • Contract for Waste Disposal Provider (clinical waste disposal) • Contract for Waste Disposal Provider (anatomical waste) • Contract for Waste Disposal Provider (pharmaceutical waste) • Contract for Waste Disposal Provider (sharps) 		

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4 - PHARMACY		MANDATORY MINIMUM REQUIREMENT
4.1	Records must be kept of the annual caseload and range of species treated at or from the premises.	<i>This is to ensure that an appropriate range of animal remedies is available.</i>
4.2	A range of animal remedies consistent with good standard of practice and range of procedures undertaken must be stored at the premises. Precisely what animal remedies should be available will depend on the scope of the practice.	<i>The practice of veterinary medicine usually involves the treatment of animals with animal remedies: it is in the interests of animal welfare that these products are available to the treating veterinary practitioner.</i>
4.3	The Certificate of Suitability holder must ensure the storage, safekeeping, dispensing, record-keeping and management of animal remedies at the premises in conformance with Veterinary Product Authorisation and Animal Remedies Regulations and the Misuse of Drugs Acts.	<i>There are legal obligations on veterinary practitioners regarding the safe handling of animal remedies, outlined in the current Animal Remedies Regulations and the Misuse of Drugs Acts.</i>
4.4	If refrigeration of animal remedies is required it must be separate from that for food or pathological samples or carcasses. Specifically, such storage must be separate from any domestic storage.	<i>This is necessary to prevent cross-contamination.</i>
4.5	A system must be in place for the recording and reporting to the Health Product Regulatory Authority of any suspected Adverse Drug Reactions.	<i>The reporting of adverse drug reactions assists the surveillance of the safety of veterinary medicines.</i>
4.6	Evidence must be provided that prescribing is in accordance with Council's Code of Professional Conduct, Ethical Veterinary Practice and good prescribing practices.	<i>This is in the interest of Animal Welfare, Environment, Public Health and to minimise antimicrobial resistance.</i>
Records which may be requested by Authorised Officers under this Standard include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caseload and range of species treated at or from the premises • ARR records • ADR reports (if applicable) 		

5 - BIOSECURITY		MANDATORY MINIMUM REQUIREMENT
5.1	All areas of veterinary premises, including all instruments, apparatus and apparel used in connection with the practice of veterinary medicine, must be maintained in a sanitary and orderly condition at all times.	<i>This is to present a professional image and minimise the risk of disease spread.</i>
5.2	The entire facility should be clean, uncluttered and free of impediments and obstructions.	<i>This is to present a professional image and minimise the risk of injury to staff, clients or patients.</i>
5.3	N/A – No surgery is to be performed in the Unit. This does not exclude the emergency minor surgical treatment of animals presented at the unit. Animals requiring major emergency surgery should be stabilized at the unit before	

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	transfer to a suitable RVC or RVH a reasonable distance from the unit	
5.4	Sanitising agents capable of killing viruses and bacteria must be used to disinfect the premises.	<i>This is to minimise the risk of disease spread.</i>
5.5	The Certificate of Suitability (COS) holder must ensure that adequate measures are in place to prevent the spread of contagious disease in relation to the premises, staff, instruments, equipment and vehicles.	<i>This is to minimise the risk of disease spread.</i>
5.6	Boot dip and protective clothing	<i>Not applicable (N/A)</i>
5.7	Vehicles must be kept in a clean and tidy condition in the interest of animal health.	<i>This is in the interest of hygiene and disease control.</i>
5.8	Documentary evidence clearly identifying the proposed locations where veterinary services are to be provided must be available. The perimeters of these locations and any adjoining animal holding facility must be available for inspection. There must be a physical boundary between the unit and any adjoining animal holding facility. Appropriate Biosecurity measures must be in place both within the unit, at the client parking and waiting areas and particularly between the unit and any premises or animal holding facility where animals not attending the unit may be present.	<i>This is to minimise the risk of disease spread.</i>
Records which may be requested by Authorised Officers under this Standard include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning protocols and schedules • Documentary evidence clearly identifying perimeters as described in 5.8. 		
6 - POST-MORTEM EXAMINATION AND CARCASE DISPOSAL		MANDATORY MINIMUM REQUIREMENT
6.1	Arrangements must be in place for the post-mortem examination of animals, where necessary, at another registered veterinary premises or at a veterinary pathology laboratory.	<i>Post-mortem examination provides useful information for the veterinary practitioner and the owner and aids in diagnosis and treatment of cohort animals.</i>
6.2	All animal tissues must be enclosed in appropriate containers and kept in an area away from the public before being promptly removed for disposal or dispatch.	<i>This is to prevent cross-contamination and prevent distress to staff, clients and members of the public.</i>
6.3	Freezer storage	<i>Not applicable (N/A)</i>
6.4	Adequate facilities for PME	<i>Not applicable (N/A)</i>
Records which may be requested by Authorised Officers under this Standard include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangement for post mortem 		
7 - VEHICLE		MANDATORY MINIMUM REQUIREMENT
7.1	Each vehicle/Unit used by a registered person in connection with the practice of veterinary medicine must comply with appropriate legislation.	<i>A registered person is expected to conform with legal requirements.</i>

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7.2	Each vehicle/Unit must be kept in a clean and tidy condition.	<i>A practice vehicle is an intrinsic part of a practitioner's professional image.</i>
7.3	Protective clothing & footwear	<i>Not applicable (N/A)</i>
7.4	Animal remedies should be stored in a secure place and in accordance with the recommendations of the manufacturer. This will in most circumstances include the provision of a refrigeration unit. There must be an appropriate stock level in the unit to support anticipated demand and avoid animal remedies going out of date.	<i>It is unsafe and illegal to use out-of-date animal remedies. Animal remedies have specific storage requirements which must be adhered to in order to maintain their safety and efficiency. Veterinary equipment and many animal remedies can be dangerous if handled by lay-people and it is incumbent on practitioners to minimise the risk of break-ins to practice vehicles storing such equipment/remedies.</i>
7.5	Adequate restraint, diagnostic equipment and sampling material must be carried to allow the diagnosis and treatment of those conditions normally encountered. Dirty equipment must be separated and cleaned immediately after use or at the first available opportunity.	<i>Veterinary practice and animal welfare are facilitated by access to the correct equipment for restraint and diagnosis. Separation of dirty equipment avoids the spread of disease between animals.</i>
7.6	Suitable waste disposal containers must be provided for clinical, biological and sharps waste.	<i>This is a requirement under Health and Safety legislation.</i>
7.7	An efficient method of communication with clients/office must be available in each vehicle.	<i>This is to ensure that calls can be dealt with speedily and efficiently.</i>
8 – LIBRARY MANDATORY MINIMUM REQUIREMENT		
8.1	Access to appropriate professional material must be readily available for research and education via the internet and/or library.	<i>The internet provides timely access to the most up-to-date research and information.</i>
9 - OFFICE/RECEPTION/WAITING AREA MANDATORY MINIMUM REQUIREMENT		
9.1	The Certificate of Suitability (COS) holder must display the current extract from the Register of Certificates of Suitability in a prominent place in the premises to which it relates. The COS must be displayed in each Unit	<i>This is a requirement under the Act. Authorised Officers are entitled to ask to see the COS.</i>
9.2	Names and qualifications of registered veterinary practitioners and registered veterinary nurses practising veterinary medicine from the premises must be displayed in each Unit. This must include the name of the certificate holder for the purposes of the Premises Accreditation Scheme Regulations.	<i>All registered persons must work at or from registered premises (unless the premises are exempt).</i>

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9.3	The Certificate of Suitability holder must satisfy him/herself that the registered person/s are on the Veterinary Council's register.	<i>It is a legal requirement that all veterinary practitioners and veterinary nurses who provide veterinary services are registered with the Veterinary Council.</i>
9.4	Defined client area.	<i>Not applicable (N/A)</i>
9.5	Adequate heat & ventilation	<i>Not applicable (N/A)</i>
9.6	Hand washing facilities for clients must be available in the Unit.	<i>This is in the interests of hygiene and disease control.</i>
9.7	Cleaning equipment and sanitary supplies must be stored safely away from the public.	<i>This is to ensure the safety of clients and staff.</i>
9.8	Commercial merchandise.	<i>Not applicable (N/A)</i>
9.9	Displays not to impede.	<i>Not applicable (N/A)</i>
9.10	Stock deliveries.	<i>Not applicable (N/A)</i>
9.11	There must be adequate and appropriate indoor lighting throughout the Unit	<i>This is to ensure the safety of clients, patients and staff.</i>
9.12	There must be adequate internal signage to indicate fire escapes, X-ray areas etc.	<i>This is to ensure the safety of clients, patients and staff.</i>
9.13	Separation of predator/prey species.	<i>Not applicable (N/A)</i>
9.14	A sign indicating basic and out of hours consultation fees must be displayed.	<i>This is for client information.</i>
Records which may be requested by Authorised Officers under this Standard include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage • Registration file of registered persons 		
10 – PREMISES - EXTERNAL REQUIREMENT		MANDATORY ADDITIONAL
10.1	This specially licensed Charity Unit must be associated with a veterinary premises registered under the PAS in the RVC or RVH classification which must be a permanent structure.	<i>A permanent structure reassures clients that continuity of care will be available for their animals.</i>
10.2	The Charity unit shall meet any bye-laws and meet with any Environmental Legislation and Planning regulations.	<i>This is a legal requirement.</i>
10.3	Maintenance of grounds.	<i>Not applicable (N/A)</i>
10.4	The proposed locations where veterinary services are to be offered by the Unit shall meet the appropriate Health and Safety Standards.	<i>Not shared with entrance to a private dwelling or retail outlet or any animal holding area.</i>
10.5	There must be adequate external lighting of the unit, client parking and waiting areas and other environs.	<i>This is to ensure the safety of clients and staff.</i>
10.6	Doors and windows should be self-closing or otherwise secured.	<i>This is to prevent the escape or theft of animals and the theft of animal remedies.</i>
10.7	Loading & unloading.	<i>Not applicable (N/A)</i>

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10.8	Signs must be kept in good repair. Consultation days, hours of attendance and telephone numbers must be clearly visible. Telephone numbers for emergency 24 hour cover must also be made available.	<i>To present a professional image and so that information needed by the public is easily read. The public must have access to veterinary care at all times.</i>
Records which may be requested by Authorised Officers under this Standard include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COS holder must be able to produce evidence of planning approval from local authority on request. 		
11 - EXAMINATION ROOM		MANDATORY ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT
11.1	Records must be kept of the annual caseload and range of species examined at the premises.	<i>This is to ensure that appropriate equipment and facilities are provided for the examination of animals.</i>
11.2	An examination room, adequately lit, and generally free of extraneous noise and activity, must be available for the complete physical examination of patients by a veterinary practitioner in private.	<i>This is to ensure animal welfare, appropriate veterinary care and client confidentiality.</i>
11.3	The examination room must be of sufficient size to accommodate the veterinary practitioner, assistant, patient and client comfortably.	<i>This is to ensure animal welfare, appropriate veterinary care and the safety of staff and clients.</i>
11.4	Hand washing facilities must be available in the Unit	<i>This is in the interests of hygiene and disease control.</i>
11.5	Each examination room must contain at least 2 covered/enclosed waste receptacles, one of which should be for clinical waste only. Bins should preferably be operated by foot plate.	<i>Open waste bins are aesthetically unacceptable, unhygienic and may be a source of noxious odours.</i>
11.6	The floor and examination table surface must be capable of being cleaned and disinfected between patients.	<i>This is in the interests of hygiene and disease control.</i>
11.7	Diagnostic equipment needed for the routine physical examination of the patient must be readily available.	<i>Veterinary practice and animal welfare are enhanced by access to appropriate diagnostic equipment. Precisely what equipment should be available will depend on the nature of the practice.</i>
11.8	Restraint devices must be present and must be of adequate design, clean and in good working order.	<i>This is to ensure the safety of patients, staff and clients. Precisely what equipment should be available will depend on the nature of the practice.</i>
11.9	Equipment for the accurate weighing of patients must be available.	<i>This is to ensure appropriate dosage of veterinary medicinal products.</i>
11.10	Stocks/crush.	<i>Not applicable (N/A)</i>

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11.11	Trot-up area.	<i>Not applicable (N/A)</i>
11.12	All weather lunge ring.	<i>Not applicable (N/A)</i>
Records which may be requested by Authorised Officers under this Standard include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual caseload and range of species examined at the premises. 		
12 – TREATMENT/PROCEDURE ROOM		NOT APPLICABLE
12.1	Availability	Not applicable (N/A)
12.2	Adequate Size	Not applicable (N/A)
12.3	Cleaning & disinfection	Not applicable (N/A)
13 - IN-PATIENT ROOM AND FACILITIES		NOT APPLICABLE
13.1	Records annual caseload & range of species treated	Not applicable (N/A)
13.2	Patient monitoring	Not applicable (N/A)
13.3	VP on call/rota	Not applicable (N/A)
13.4	Monitoring of inpatients	Not applicable (N/A)
13.5	Information re level of care	Not applicable (N/A)
13.6	Holding facilities	Not applicable (N/A)
13.7	Provision for food & water	Not applicable (N/A)
13.8	Ease of observation & access	Not applicable (N/A)
13.9	Separate compartments	Not applicable (N/A)
13.10	Space for postural adjustments	Not applicable (N/A)
13.11	Mare & foal box	Not applicable (N/A)
13.12	Cleaning & disinfection	Not applicable (N/A)
13.13	Provision of exercise	Not applicable (N/A)
13.14	Ambient temperature	Not applicable (N/A)
13.15	Air circulation	Not applicable (N/A)
13.16	Bedding	Not applicable (N/A)
13.17	Disposal of bedding	Not applicable (N/A)
13.18	Types of surfaces	Not applicable (N/A)
13.19	Animal ID	Not applicable (N/A)
13.20	Separation/isolation facilities	Not applicable (N/A)
13.21	Neonatal care	Not applicable (N/A)
13.22	Intensive care	Not applicable (N/A)
14 - FOOD STORAGE AND PREPARATION		NOT APPLICABLE
14.1	Defined area	Not applicable (N/A)
14.2	Bulk food storage	Not applicable (N/A)
14.3	Refrigeration of canned food	Not applicable (N/A)
14.4	Cleaning & disinfection	Not applicable (N/A)
14.5	Adequate daily feedings	Not applicable (N/A)
14.6	Adequate fresh water	Not applicable (N/A)
15 - ANAESTHESIA AND RECOVERY		NOT APPLICABLE
This does not rule out the use of anaesthesia when treating emergency cases presented at the unit.		
15.1	Records annual caseload & range of species treated	Not applicable (N/A)

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15.2	Equipment	Not applicable (N/A)
15.3	Oxygen & breathing systems	Not applicable (N/A)
15.4	Endotracheal tubes	Not applicable (N/A)
15.5	Servicing of equipment	Not applicable (N/A)
15.6	Primary & back-up oxygen	Not applicable (N/A)
15.7	Anaesthetic gas scavenging	Not applicable (N/A)
15.8	Monitoring of anaesthesia	Not applicable (N/A)
15.9	Resuscitation	Not applicable (N/A)
15.10	Consent forms	Not applicable (N/A)
16 - SURGERY		NOT APPLICABLE
This does not exclude the emergency minor surgical treatment of animals presented at the unit. Animals requiring major emergency surgery should be stabilized at the unit before transfer to a suitable RVC or RVH a reasonable distance from the unit		
16.1	Operating area availability	Not applicable (N/A)
16.2	Annual caseload records	Not applicable (N/A)
16.3	Surgical & radiographic equipment	Not applicable (N/A)
16.4	Radiograph viewing	Not applicable (N/A)
16.5	Induction & pre-op area	Not applicable (N/A)
16.6	Separate scrub area	Not applicable (N/A)
16.7	Table & light	Not applicable (N/A)
16.8	Sterilisation of instruments	Not applicable (N/A)
16.9	Cold chemical sterilisation	Not applicable (N/A)
16.10	Sterilisation indicators	Not applicable (N/A)
16.11	Surgical attire	Not applicable (N/A)
16.12	Consent form	Not applicable (N/A)
16.13	Surgery log	Not applicable (N/A)
16.14	No through traffic	Not applicable (N/A)
16.15	Clock with second hand	Not applicable (N/A)
16.16	Appropriate clothing and footwear	Not applicable (N/A)
16.17	Emergency power source	Not applicable (N/A)
17 - LABORATORY		NOT APPLICABLE
17.1	Range of diagnostic services	Not applicable (N/A)
17.2	Submissions to outside laboratories	Not applicable (N/A)
17.3	Defined area	Not applicable (N/A)
17.4	Storage of specimens & reagents	Not applicable (N/A)
17.5	Reference ranges	Not applicable (N/A)
17.6	Emergency case	Not applicable (N/A)
18 - RADIOGRAPHY AND DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING		NOT APPLICABLE
18.1	Licensing	Not applicable (N/A)
18.2	ID of radiographs	Not applicable (N/A)
18.3	Restraining devices	Not applicable (N/A)
18.4	Exposure log	Not applicable (N/A)

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18.5	Compliance with legislation	Not applicable (N/A)
18.6	Dosimeters & records	Not applicable (N/A)
18.7	Processing	Not applicable (N/A)
18.8	Hazardous waste	Not applicable (N/A)
18.9	Darkroom/automatic processor	Not applicable (N/A)
18.10	Technique chart	Not applicable (N/A)
18.11	Efficient filing, storage & retrieval	Not applicable (N/A)
18.12	Viewing box	Not applicable (N/A)
18.13	Arrangements	Not applicable (N/A)
18.14	Range of modalities required	Not applicable (N/A)