

A photograph of a woman with blonde hair and glasses, wearing a dark blue jacket with a stethoscope around her neck, smiling and petting a black and white cow. A young girl with brown hair in a braid, also smiling, is standing behind her, also petting the cow. The background shows the interior of a barn with wooden slats.

vetlife

Annual Review

2015

vetlife.org.uk

Veterinary Benevolent Fund is a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee, Company No. 153010 Charity Registration No. 224776.



Foreword

From our Patron, The Lord Soulsby of Swaffham Prior

'It gives me great pleasure to see **Vetlife developing to meet the changing demands of the veterinary profession** and working so closely with other veterinary organisations.

I would like to thank the Board of Directors and the volunteers who help to run Vetlife's support services.

As always, the charity is grateful for the donations which allow it to deliver its support services to the veterinary community.'

The Lord Soulsby of Swaffham Prior



What we do

Our Vision

A UK **veterinary community** with high levels of physical and mental wellbeing.

Our Mission

Vetlife provides **support** to members of the UK veterinary community and their families who have emotional, health or financial concerns, whilst seeking ways to prevent such situations in the future.

How we do it

Vetlife funds and manages three support services in order to achieve this:



helpline

Vetlife Helpline provides confidential emotional support by phone or anonymous email via the website.

Support is provided by trained volunteers; vets, VNs, and others who have knowledge of the veterinary profession.

It is a completely confidential, non-judgmental listening service, which gives people time and space to talk. People calling are supported to access specialist help where appropriate.



health support

Vetlife Health Support provides professional support for mental health issues, including those related to stress, anxiety, depression, alcohol, drugs and eating disorders.



financial support

Vetlife Financial Support provides financial and other assistance to veterinary surgeons, and their dependants, in the form of regular monthly grants or one off special gifts. We may also fund professional advice on issues such as debt and State benefits.

For younger people, this support can mean that they don't have their homes repossessed or that they are enabled to deal with their physical or mental health problems and return to work successfully. For the elderly or those unable to return to work, the support provides them with an improved quality of life.

Our People

Vetlife Board of Directors



John Moffitt
President



Graham Dick



Bill Mavir



Nick Coulson
Honorary Secretary



Jo Dyer



Katie Moore



Geoff Little
Honorary Treasurer



Emily Folwell



Jade Statt



Rosie Allister



Magda Jaszczak



Mary Thomson

Vetlife Area Representatives

Yorkshire & Humberside

Agnes Winter

Cornwall

Jo Dyer

Cumbria, Dumfries & Galloway

John Moffitt

Devon

Bob Hooper

Norfolk, Suffolk & Cambridgeshire

Hilda Jackson

Nottingham, Derby, Leicester & Lincolnshire

Ewan McNeill

Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Northants, Bucks & London

Hazel Bentall

Kent, Surrey, Sussex & Essex

Paul Ripley

Lancashire, Cheshire, Merseyside, Staffordshire & Shropshire

Barry Johnson and Magda Jaszczak

East Scotland

Rosie Allister and David Rimer

West Scotland

Mauraid Anderson

North-East England

Linda Clarke

Northern Ireland

Perpetua McNamee

Somerset, Avon & Gloucestershire

Peter Clark

Dorset, Hants, Wilts & Oxon

Nick Coulson

Wales

Bob Stevenson

Hereford & Worcester, West Midlands, Worcestershire & Warwickshire

Kenelm Lewis and Vicky Gower

Bungalow Liaison Officer

Nick Coulson

Mentoring/Recent Graduates

Austin Kirwan

Vetlife Nominated Representatives

SPVS

Karmen Watson

AVS

Hannah Mason

BSAVA

Julian Hoad

RCVS

Kit Sturgess

BVA

Robin Hargreaves

Vetlife's impact in 2015

29,800

visits to the **Vetlife website**
for information and advice

280

Facebook posts

288

Tweets

2,655

followers on Twitter



962

direct acts of **support** to
the veterinary community

8

individuals provided with
specialist debt and benefits
advice funded by Vetlife

20

home visits **delivered** by area
representatives to discuss
financial and other support

65

veterinary surgeons
and dependants given
financial **support**

207

individuals **provided** with
professional mental health
& addiction support

662

phone or email conversations
with our **helpline**



Financial Support

'Vetlife stayed there for me, when even my own family did not. I will be **forever grateful** for their unstinting support.'

Helping People Back to Work

Vetlife has continued to support 'at risk' veterinary surgeons, when consent was given for Vetlife Health to contact them, to enable some individuals to remain in work. This can prevent potential hardship, and ensures continuity in their professional lives.

Vetlife has also helped veterinary surgeons who have been off sick for a period of time to return to work by arranging for them to see practice in a sympathetic environment, gain access to CPD and receive financial assistance to get back on to the practising register of the RCVS.

£109,247

to **36 veterinary surgeons** (or dependants) as monthly grants

£20,230

to **60 veterinary surgeons** (or dependants) as one-off gifts, usually at Christmas time

New Cases 2015

42

enquiries

11

new applicants were given financial support



£20

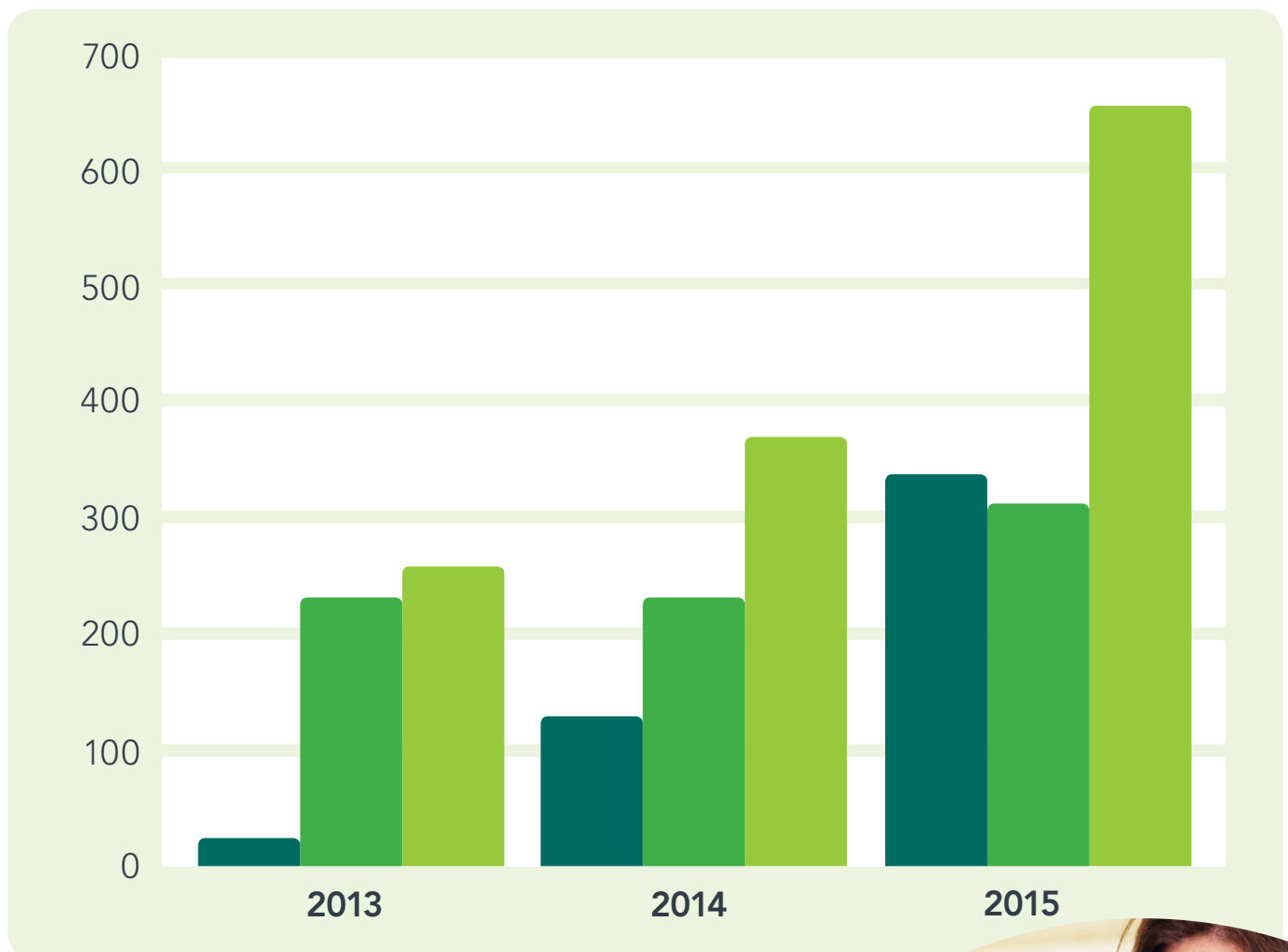
£20 could fund a home visit to a vet in financial difficulty



Vetlife Helpline

'Getting good help is essential. From personal experience, I can applaud Vetlife Helpline for getting me through my own dark periods. I feel that, because so many factors relate to events specific to veterinary work, to have someone at the end of the phone who knows our industry is reassuring.'

Anonymous, Letter to Veterinary Record June 2015



Email



Phone



Total communications

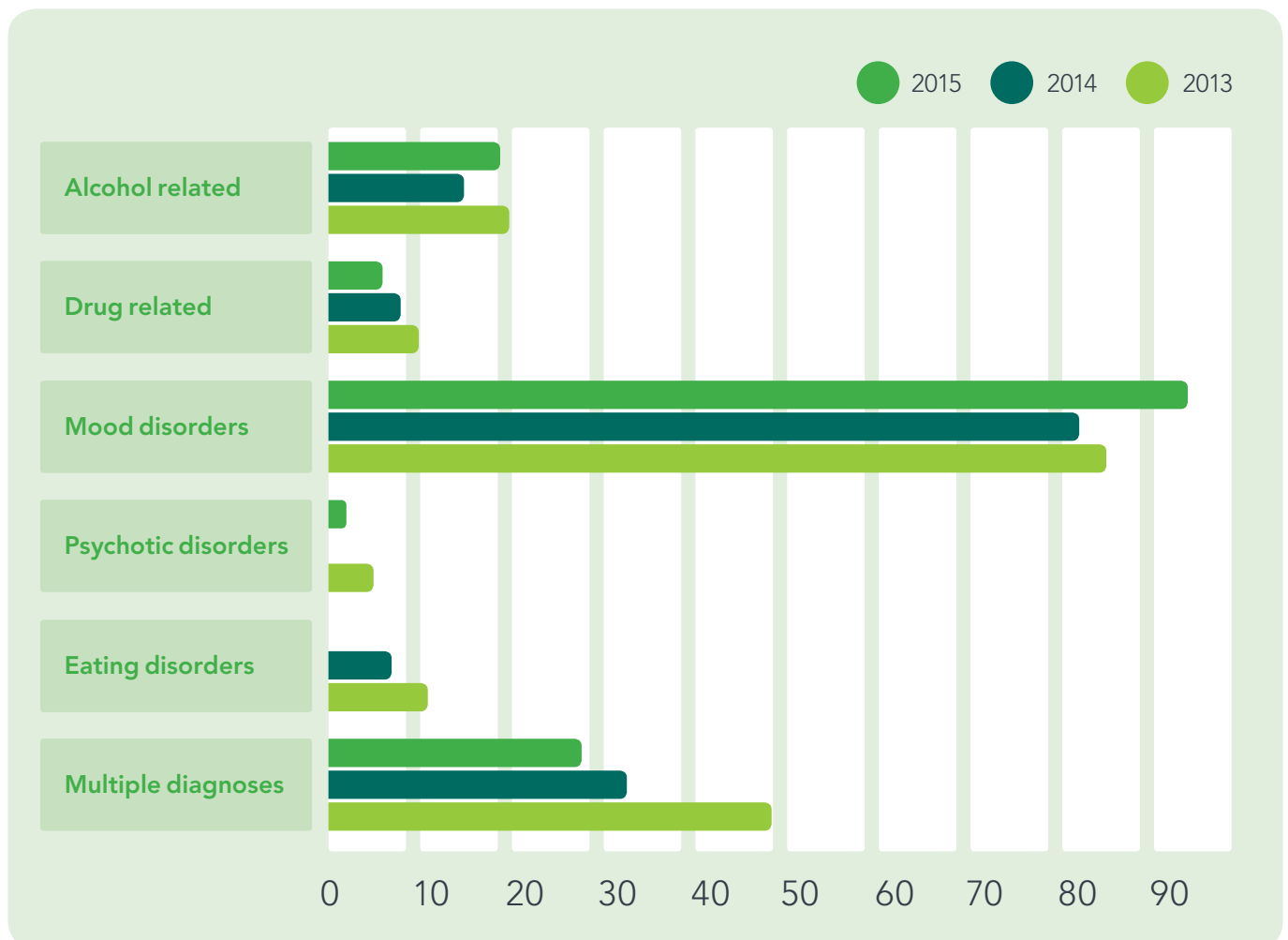
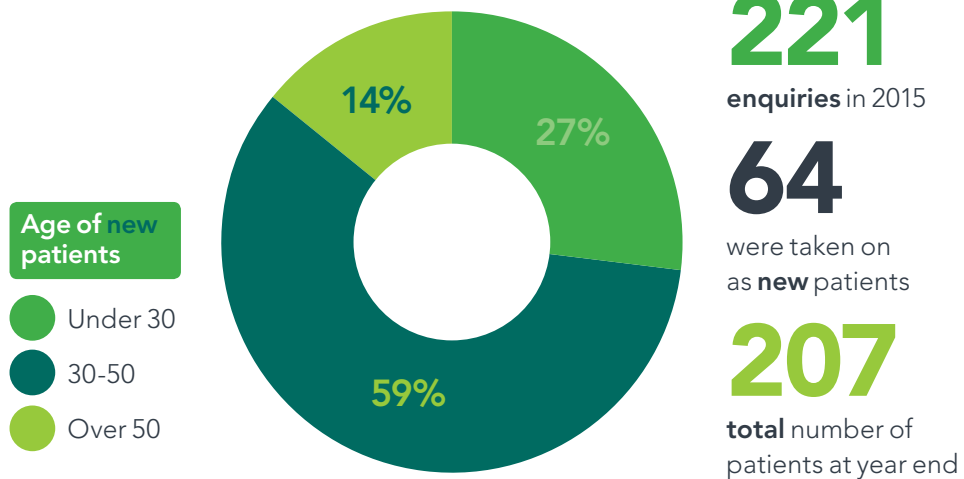
£5

£5 could provide vital support by email or phone from our helpline





Vetlife Health Support



* Several patients had multiple diagnoses and so the percentages for each year do not sum to 100%

Real Stories:

My husband died by suicide

I cannot adequately describe the panic of finding out that my husband had died by suicide. From the police phone call after midnight, to my repeated vomiting with fear and turmoil while talking to the officer who came to my house.

How was I to tell my beautiful children, sleeping, blissfully unaware for the moment of how their world would be catapulted into chaos, misery and despair.

The hardest thing I've ever had to do was to tell my innocent children that their father had died, and by his own hand. A close second is my attempt at maintaining some semblance of normal life for years after when all around was grief, fear and fury.

Suicide is so cruel to those left behind. Children are devastated and will always wonder 'why' and 'why us', while the remaining adult is unfairly blamed for the death and is left to cope with absolute chaos. In a rural community, where my husband was the local vet, I had to endure hateful behaviour directed at me, the survivor. I can't describe the depths of grief my children experienced. We were living in a nightmare. Every minute of every day was a nightmare.

I can honestly say that the number of people who genuinely helped beyond the first two week period are few and far between. I guess people just can't cope with misery. Folk do not know what to say, or do, to help, and quite frankly, everything is upsetting anyway because no-one can understand the depth of trauma and despair. This is where Vetlife is crucial to the families left to cope with the aftermath of suicide. No-one else is equipped to deal with this particular devastation.

I was phoned immediately by Vetlife when they received my application forms requesting financial help.

All my husband's bank accounts were frozen, so, in addition to dealing with traumatised children, I was immediately plunged into financial instability, with fear of repossession. I'll never forget their kind, reassuring words, telling me that Vetlife were going to help me financially. I was given monthly cheques initially for a three month period, which was then extended for another three months.

This represented an immediate safety net, releasing me from fear of repossession and of not being able to pay credit card bills. We also received wonderful, gentle, professional counselling from Vetlife Health Support. The National Coordinator came to our home and spoke to me and the children. I still phone him, years later, when I am concerned about an aspect of my childrens' behaviour, because even now, there are consequences to deal with and worries to talk about. On several occasions, he has talked me out of a panic with his calm reassurance. His words give me the strength to carry on when all I want to do is to hide away from worries.

The kindness and empathy of the people in this organisation is overwhelming. Vetlife quite literally have saved me and my wonderful children.

'The kindness and empathy of the people in this organisation is overwhelming.'



Our plans for 2016



Launch a new Vetlife website



Circulate a new Vetlife Helpline sticker, specifically designed as a crisis intervention to be stuck on dangerous drugs cabinets, to every member of the veterinary community



Expand Vetlife Health Support with the help of funding from RCVS and VDS



Recruit and train more new helpline volunteers



Raise awareness of the help that Vetlife can provide related to CPD



As an independent charity we rely on the generosity of the veterinary community to be able to continue our work

Vetlife's Five Year Strategic Objectives 2010 – 2015

Expand health support capacity to meet increased demand and to address the NHS shortfall in mental health care provision

Increase the number of Vetlife volunteers and offer other communication channels for accessing the helpline

Continue to review the financial support that the charity provides and how it is delivered

Increase representation at vet schools

Strengthen further the Board's decision making processes and governance

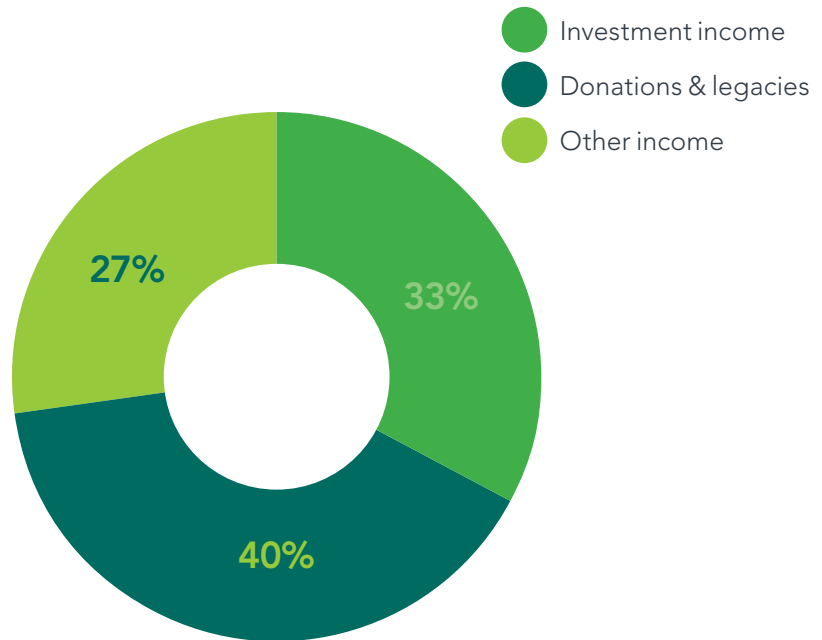
Financial Summary

Income

Total income in 2015 was
£687,068

an increase of 28.8% on 2014 –
mostly due to a one off gift from
VDS of £150k to mark their
150th anniversary

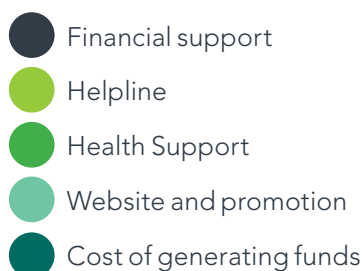
Vetlife aims to add £100,000 per
annum to reserves to ensure that
adequate support will be available
to the veterinary community in
the future.



Expenditure

Total expenditure was
£447,507

an increase of 5.8% on 2014



Thank you!

Ways to support Vetlife

From signing up as a member/regular donor to remembering Vetlife in your will, there is a range of ways to support our work.

Find out more at vetlife.org.uk

Online donations can be made at justgiving.com/vetlife

Sponsored Fundraising Events



Rosie Allister

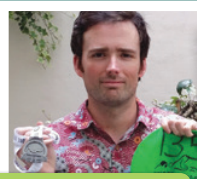


Stuart Reid



Martin Hosegood

Thank you to those who ran the Virgin London Marathon (above) and to our other fundraisers (below).



James Mullarkey
from the BVA swam
the Thames



Meopham Vets



Ama Groza
ran the Brighton
half marathon

Donations

The majority of donations to Vetlife come from over 500 veterinary surgeons that are Vetlife members and kindly give regular support or from veterinary practices that add a donation to Vetlife on their Veterinary Defence Society renewal form.

In 2015 we were also grateful for support from the RCVS's Mind Matters Initiative and the Veterinary Defence Society itself. The Veterinary Defence Society gave us a £150k donation to mark their 150th anniversary.

Other individuals and organisations generous enough to support Vetlife with donations were:

Alresford and District Agricultural Show
Association of Veterinary Surgeons
Practising in Northern Ireland
Ayrshire Veterinary Association
Bell Equine Veterinary Clinic
Keith Bellringer
Stephen Borsberry
Alan Brack
Andrea Bradley
British Cattle Veterinary Association
British Small Animal Veterinary Association
British Veterinary Association
Richard Brown

Carl Boyde
R V Bunce
Cambridge University Veterinary Society
Cedar Veterinary Group
David Collins
Cornwall Veterinary Association
Fergus Coutts
John E Cox
Paul Duff
Roger Green
Ama Groza
Robin Hargreaves
David Hassall
Heathside Veterinary Practice
Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire Veterinary Society
Martin Hosegood
Meopham Vets
Michael Hutchison
Mike Jessop
Stuart Johnston
Murray Jones
Ross Kelly
James Kennedy
Lincolnshire and District Veterinary Association
London Veterinary Forum Ltd
Aileen McCalman-Hart
Medivet Group
M R Minns
North of England Veterinary Association
North of Scotland BVA Division

Northern Ireland Veterinary Ladies
Oakhill Veterinary Centre
Niall O'Connor
Pig Veterinary Society
Priory Veterinary Surgeons
Ratcliff Foundation
Royal Veterinary College
Nick Ryland
South East Midlands Veterinary Association
South of England Agricultural Society
Southern Counties Veterinary Society
Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons
Surrey Vet Wives
Sussex Veterinary Society
Heidi Svensgaard
University of Bristol Centaur Society
Vet Dynamics (UK) Ltd
Veterinary Defence Society
Veterinary Northern Ireland
Roland Vinkesteyn
Western Counties Veterinary Association
Jim Wight

Donations in Memory

David Bee
Louise Seddon
Charles Wright

Legacies

Pamela F Cross-Stern
Charles James Frank
Penelope Gillespie
M A Swarbrick