

## Vetlife Financial Support Area Representatives

### Information sheet for prospective volunteers

Thank you for your interest in volunteering to be a Vetlife Area Representative. This is a summary of how the Area Rep system works. If, once you have read this, you think that volunteering with Vetlife in this way could be for you, please complete an application form and we will arrange a phone interview with you.

- Vetlife Area Representatives are the interface between the charity and those members of the profession, their relatives and dependants (referred to as “Beneficiaries”) who can benefit from Vetlife’s financial charitable objects. They are volunteers who go out to meet and help new and existing Beneficiaries in order to ensure support is directed to those in need and is appropriate to their needs.
- Because we provide peer support, in-depth knowledge of the veterinary profession is a requirement for our volunteers. Volunteers can come from any veterinary background and our volunteers include vets, nurses, practice managers, and other practice staff. Student vets and student VNs should finish their training before applying for interview.
- Anyone currently serving on RCVS Disciplinary Committee or Preliminary Investigation Committee is not eligible to become an Area Representative; this is because we support people involved in the disciplinary process. If a person who is an Area Representative applies to sit on RCVS DC or PIC they will be suspended as a Rep until their DC or PIC term is complete.
- Area Representatives cover the county, or group of counties local to them, and visit with Beneficiaries within that area. Your own work life balance is a priority too and Vetlife encourages you to be realistic about this. For this reason, and to ensure that an appropriate relationship is created between a Beneficiary and their Area Representative, a Rep will be assigned no more than 4 Beneficiaries. On average, a Beneficiary will require 2 visits a year; in addition, an Area Rep will need to write reports on their Beneficiary and liaise with the Honorary Secretary as well as the Grant Awards and Grant Review Panels regarding their general welfare and financial situation. If it is not the right time to volunteer, we encourage you to reapply again when you have enough time available.
- Selection for Vetlife Area Representatives is a multi-stage process. The first step is submitting an application form, which is then reviewed by the Honorary Secretary. The next step is a phone interview, with the Honorary Secretary, followed by taking up your references (if you are successful at this

stage). The final stage of selection is the selection and training day - this is usually held annually, so you may have a wait from application to knowing whether you have been accepted. All volunteers are informed whether their application has been successful at the stages of application form, interview, and training day, with the final acceptance within a week of the training day. The initial training spans 2 days, and includes dinner and overnight accommodation. It is usually held in Edinburgh – Vetlife will reimburse travel costs. It is informative and interactive and forms part of the selection process as well as delivering training. The second day doubles as ongoing training for current Area Representatives, so there is an opportunity to meet and talk with people already in the role.

- Attendance at training is required for ongoing volunteering with Vetlife. We hold ongoing training for all volunteers at least once annually, and you need to attend this at least once every two years to continue as a volunteer.
- Whilst applications are received and interviews held all year round, initial training is held usually once annually. In addition, we never know when new applications will be made, or whereabouts in the country a new Beneficiary will be located. This means that there can be a delay of well over a year between application and being assigned a Beneficiary.
- We require contact details for two referees who can give you a character reference. References will be taken up only if you are successful at the phone interview and then commit to initial training.
- A common question we are asked is whether people who have experienced ill health themselves can apply. People with lived experience are very welcome to apply.