

impact report

2022

vetlife

Support for the
veterinary community

foreword

There is no doubt that the veterinary professions, and indeed veterinary services overall, find themselves under considerable stress during the current difficult times.

Demand for all Vetlife services has been rising year on year, with contacts to the Vetlife Helpline steadily increasing, the number of ongoing referrals to our Health Support service now almost double that of prior years and applications for Vetlife Financial Support trebling over the past year.

The present cost-of-living crisis, ongoing veterinary staffing and workload issues, and the much-welcomed expansion of Vetlife charitable operations to embrace registered veterinary nurses, have meant that our support services are approached by members of the veterinary community now more than ever before.

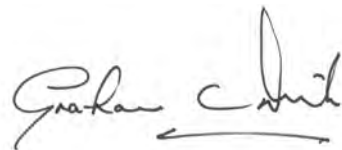
Vetlife continues to make a substantial difference to those it serves. During 2022 our volunteers handled in excess of 3,500 contacts to the Vetlife Helpline from the veterinary community and provided financial assistance to 47 applicants,

whilst our funding enabled 216 veterinary professionals to be speedily referred for professional psychiatric support.

An enhanced presence by the charity at veterinary congresses, veterinary schools and on social media has driven increased awareness of mental health and related issues in the profession and the support that Vetlife can provide.

Donations to the charity remain key to its ability to continue the provision of support and care for the welfare of many hard-pressed veterinary professionals whose goal in turn is to provide the best possible healthcare for animals.

For the support of its volunteers, fundraisers and donors and for the dedicated commitment of its staff Vetlife is truly grateful, as am I to have the honour to serve as its President.



Graham Dick, BVSc MRCVS
President



about vetlife

Vetlife is a charity which provides support to members of the UK veterinary community and their families who have emotional, health or financial concerns.

Vetlife Vision

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

Vetlife Mission

To provide 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.

Vetlife strives to ensure that those engaged in the veterinary community are aware of the sources of help and support should they, or a colleague, need assistance. The Charity provides help where it can, and signposts individuals to additional sources of help as and when appropriate. Support needs vary according to circumstance and may involve short-term help to cope with an immediate crisis, or longer-term care for those adversely affected by age, ill health or disability. Wherever possible, the Charity seeks to enable beneficiaries to return to independence and self-sufficiency.

Vetlife finances and manages three services to achieve its mission:

Vetlife Helpline: provides confidential emotional support by phone or anonymous email via the website. Support is provided by trained volunteers; veterinarians, veterinary nurses, and others who have knowledge of the veterinary profession. Callers are provided with access to specialist help where appropriate.

Vetlife Health Support: provides professional support for mental health issues, including those related to stress, anxiety, depression, alcohol, drugs and eating disorders. This service is provided by external supplier March on Stress.

Vetlife Financial Support: provides financial and other assistance to veterinary surgeons, registered veterinary nurses and their dependants, in the form of regular monthly grants or one-time special gifts.



2022 delivery & outcomes

- Vetlife helped 3,503 contacts through Vetlife Helpline (3% increase from 2021).
- Vetlife Helpline volunteers gave 18,750 hours of time to support the veterinary community.
- 216 contacts were referred on to Vetlife Health Support for psychiatric support (15.5% increase from 2021).
- 47 new applicants were helped through Vetlife Financial Support (236% increase from 2021).
- Two new expert led resources were produced and widely distributed to support the veterinary community - **'Veterinary Professionals and Loneliness'** and **'Suicide Postvention Guidance for Veterinary Workplaces'**.
- Our volunteers provided 9 talks to veterinary associations, veterinary employment groups and businesses to offer mental health support and signpost to Vetlife services.
- The Vetlife Helpline Manager spoke at 9 Vet Schools to support student wellbeing.
- We exhibited at 15 key veterinary events to provide delegates with information on self-care and supporting others while raising awareness that Vetlife is there to help in times of need.
- Vetlife Helpline continued to support practices following bereavement by suicide (postvention) and other potentially traumatic bereavement, providing support tailored to practice need.
- Initial training was provided for 23 new volunteers.
- Ongoing training for all Helpline volunteers was provided both online and in person with focus on support for veterinary professionals at different career stages, safeguarding children and adults at risk, safety planning and support for callers who may be suicidal, support for people experiencing the menopause, and skills for supporting callers with mental health needs.

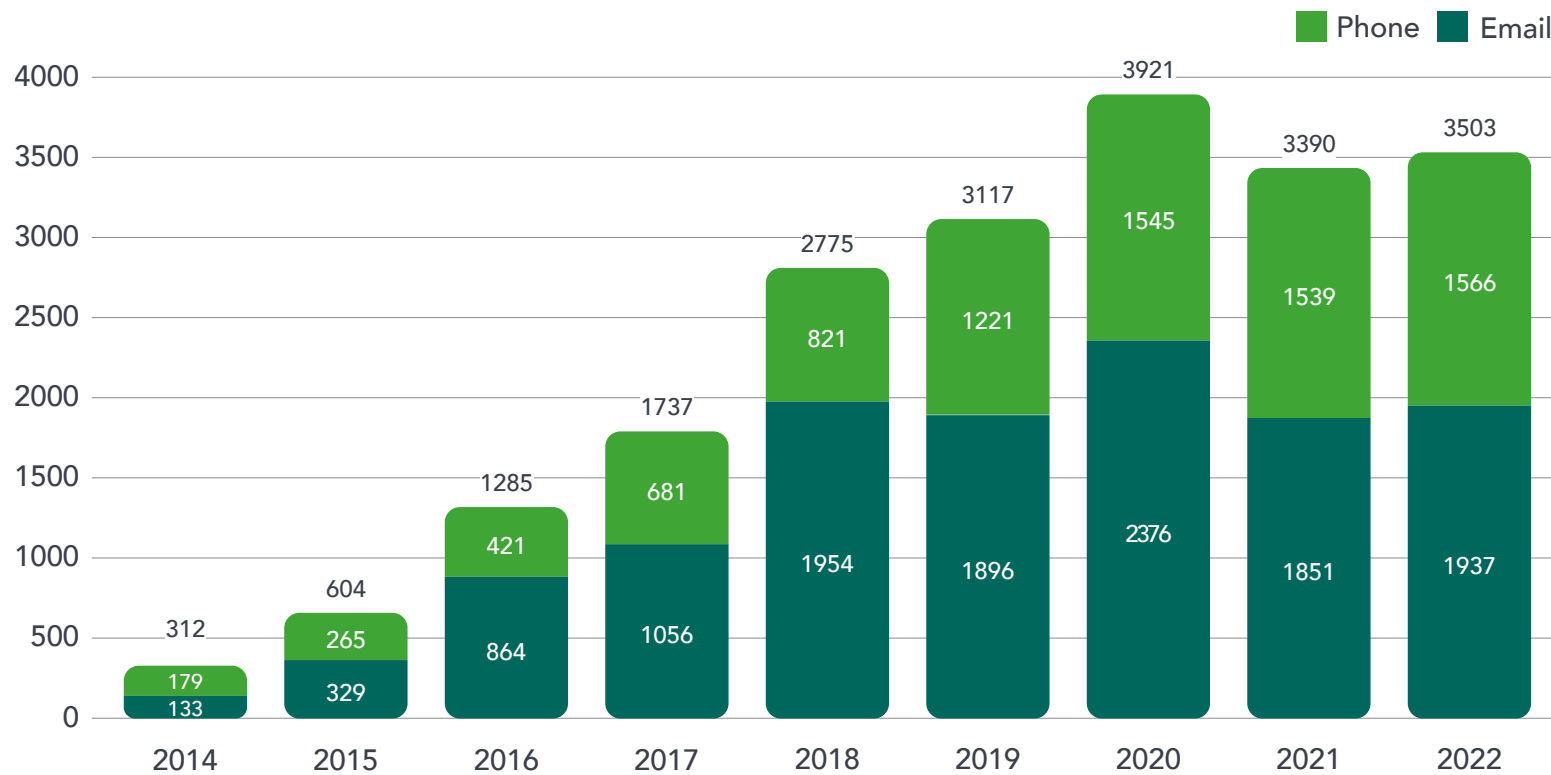


I can't even begin to express how amazing this service has been. Everyone I have spoken to is lovely and the resources that have been shared are brilliant. Thank you so much for all the support and help you have provided over the last few months.

helpline contacts handled



Recent History of Contacts to Helpline



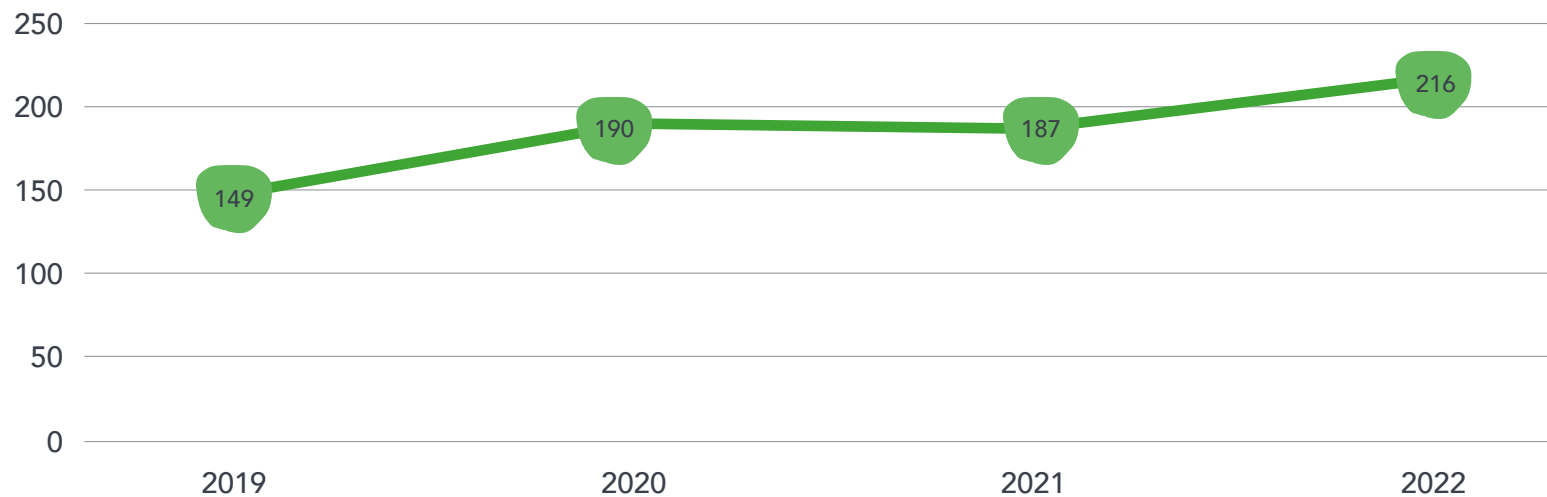
Following a surge of demand during peak Covid periods the contact rate has returned to a steady growth of 3% p.a. However, the severity and urgency of calls has steadily increased.

health support

referrals for psychiatric support



Recent History of VHS Referrals for Psychiatric Support



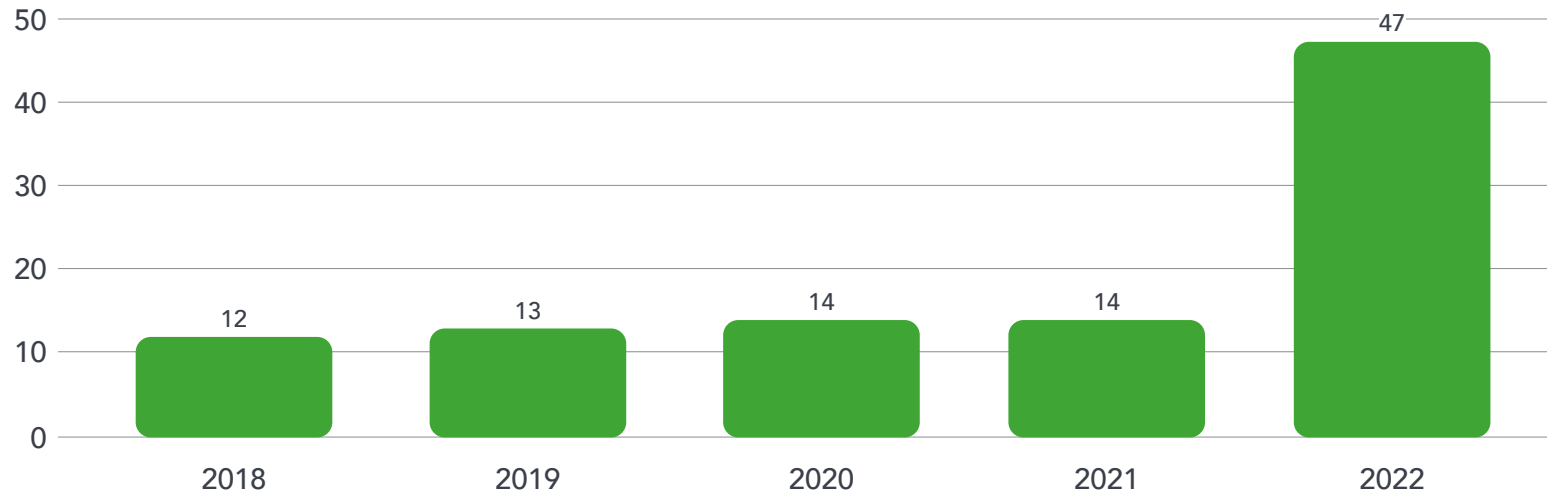
Increase in complexity of mental health needs of presenting beneficiaries reflected in more people remaining with the service for over six months. In 2022, 216 cases were referred from Helpline to Vetlife Health Support for additional psychiatric assessment and support. This represents an increase of 15.5% vs 2021.

financial support applications



Vetlife has recorded unprecedented numbers of applications for financial support in 2022 by those in the veterinary community facing significant monetary difficulties. Total supportive grant payments amounted to £183K.

Recent History of Applications for Financial Assistance



The substantive increase in distressed applications for financial support has resulted in the need to increase both employed staff and volunteer representation on assessment panels and in direct support of applicants.

testimonials from beneficiaries 2022



I very much appreciate you checking in, and really appreciated the call I had previously with you. It was very helpful, and I want to reiterate how amazing you all are for doing this job! We are so lucky as a profession to have such an excellent support network.



Saying 'Thank You' seems wholly an understatement, but it is all I can say.



All the people I spoke to were friendly, kind, understanding and listened to what I had to say. I was in regular contact with one person and felt she knew me and remembered things I'd said which helped me feel more at ease and I didn't have to explain myself or say things several times.



Very supportive and caring, non-judgemental.



Thank you so much for your help over the past couple of months, it really has made the difference knowing that there was someone there.

feedback from Safeguarding Audit 2023

Vetlife seeks to achieve a high standard in its safeguarding responsibilities and conducts a regular audit of its Safeguarding procedures. This was carried out by the independent assessor SAFEcic in 2023 from whom any recommendations for further improvements are followed up by the Safeguarding Working Group.

Amongst comments received in this most recent report were:



The Trustees should be justifiably very proud of the exceptional dedication of personnel at all levels and the charity's achievements, particularly the recent inclusion of veterinary nurses as beneficiaries.



The charity has a very strong safeguarding culture with a golden thread running from the Board, through personnel to the beneficiaries and back again.



The charity has always been prudent with resources and budgeting so donors and supporters can be confident all monies are spent wisely.



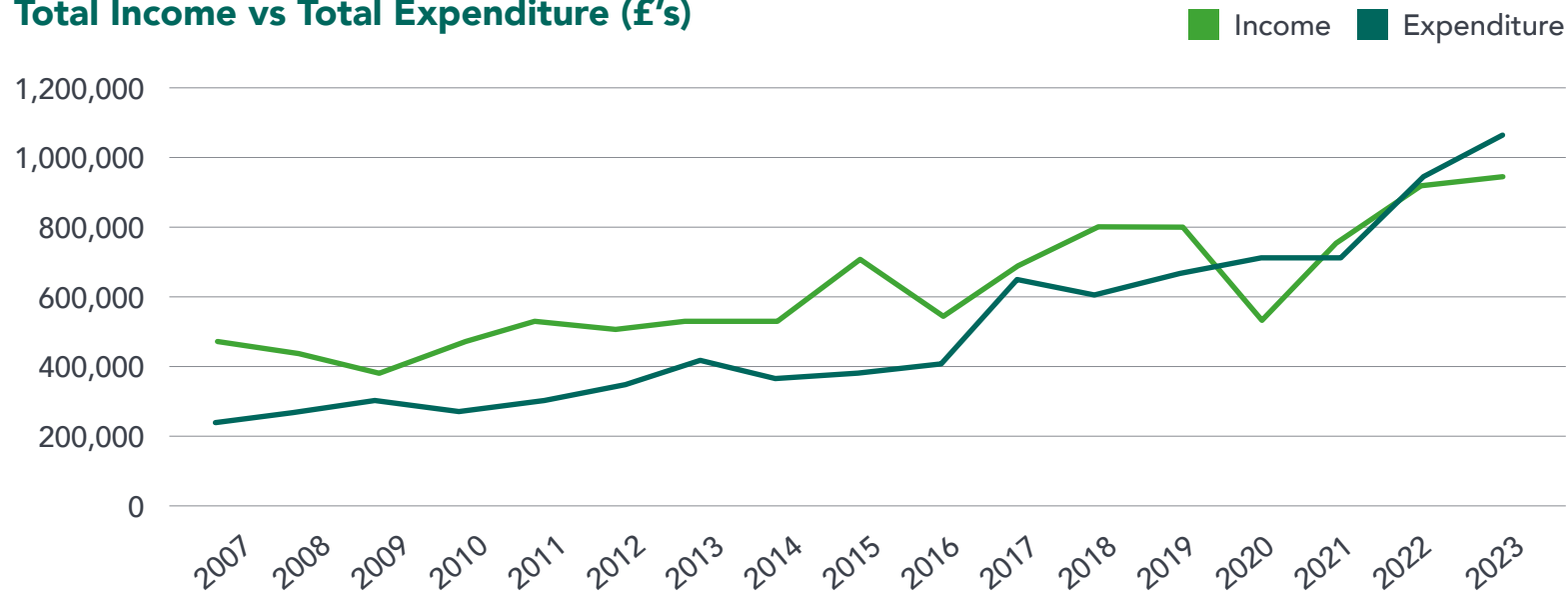
March on Stress is exceptionally well managed with robust safeguarding procedures and policy in place. They produce a very strong, informative, evidenced, and detailed quarterly Board report. They also commission external independent clinical notes audits. There is a strong contract in place with the charity. Vetlife can, quite rightfully, have every confidence in the services they provide which are excellent.

finances

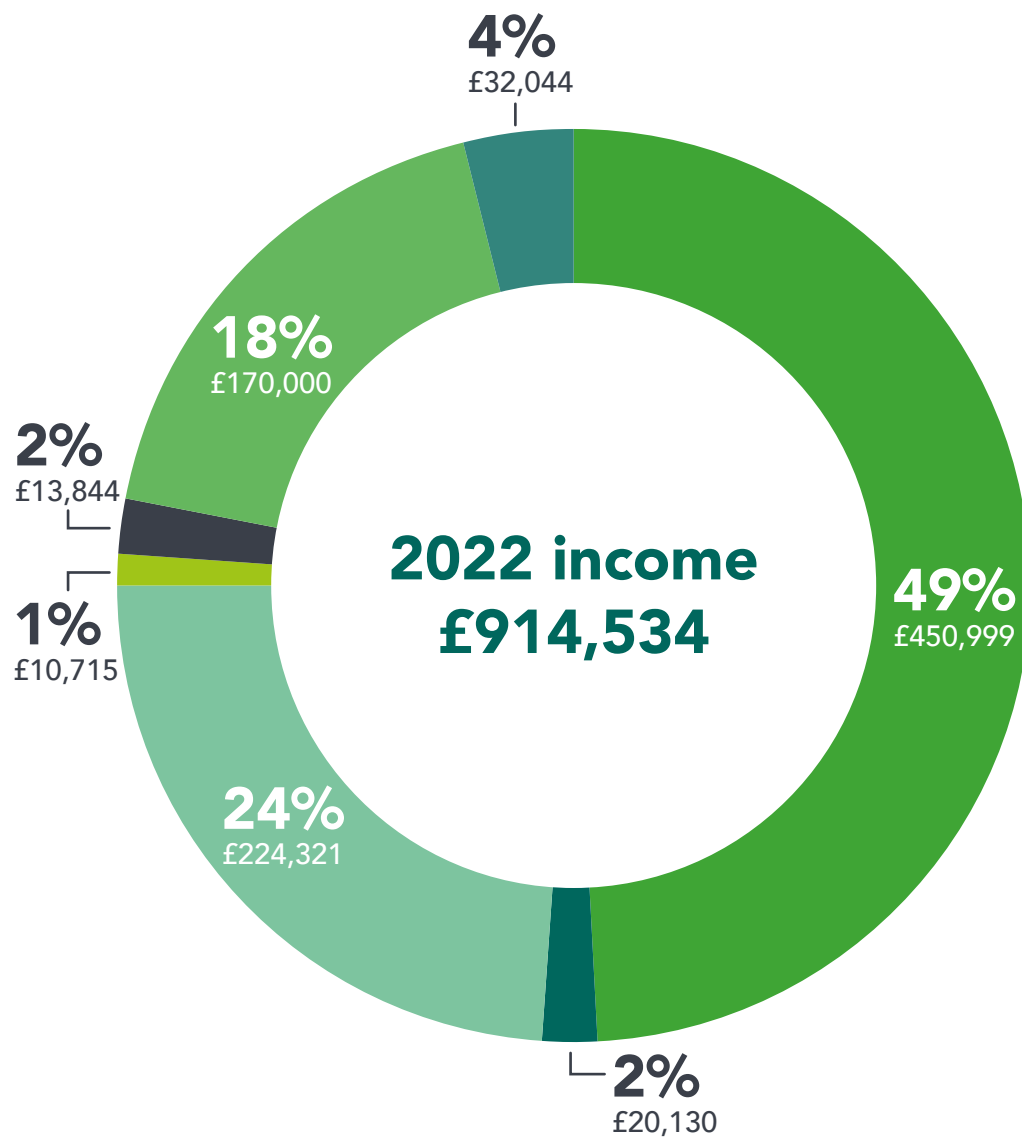
Vetlife has successfully maintained a positive fundraising to expenditure balance for many years, enabling regular increases to the investment portfolio to be achieved to provide heightened income security. It has also been assisted by a post-Covid return to fundraising events and by donations from industry and charitable concerns, without which it could not meet its mission targets.

The fourfold increase in expenditure demand over the last 15 years (9.78% CAGR) has nonetheless placed increasing pressure on funding resources. Major upswings in demand for all services have now resulted in the demand led budget currently facing an expenditure increase in excess of 15% year-on-year.

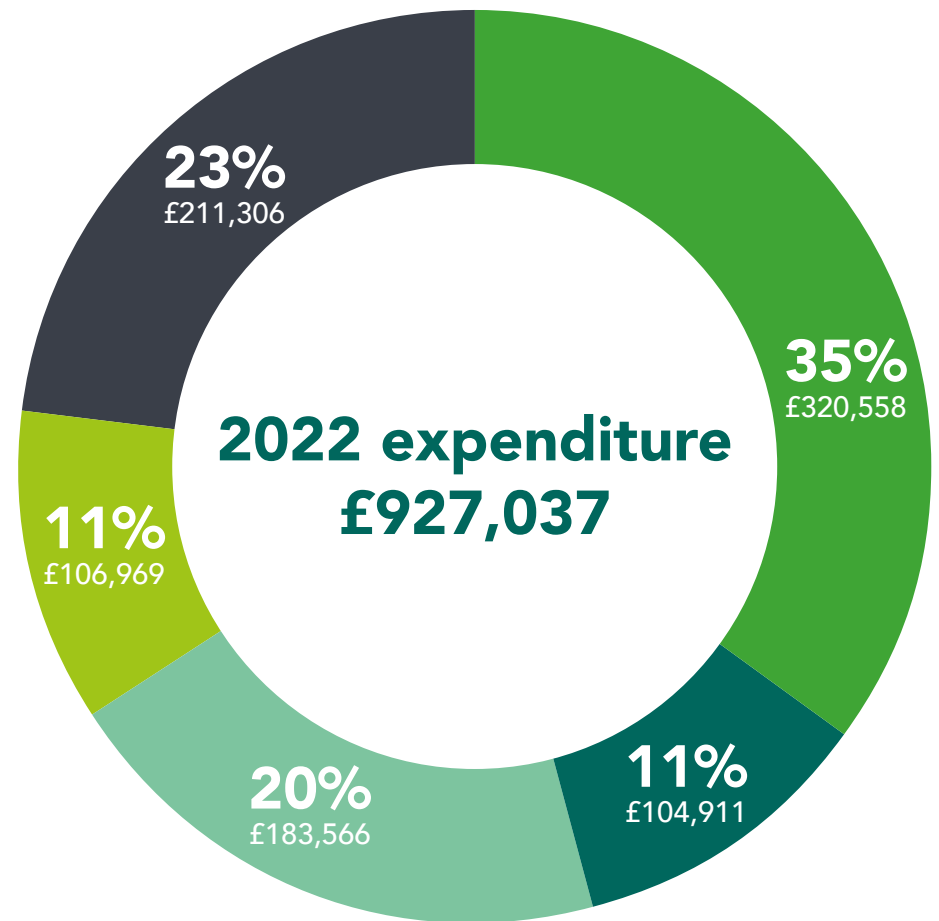
Total Income vs Total Expenditure (£'s)



Steady growth in income over 15 years has recovered following decline in Covid lockdown period helped by donations in 2022. However, the charity continues to face increasing mental health and financial challenges amongst the veterinary community in the current socio-economic environment.



- General donations
- Bungalows
- Investment income
- Legacies
- Subscriptions
- Health Support donations
- Helpline donations



- Administration
- Comms & Fundraising
- Financial Support
- Helpline
- Health Support

fundraising overview

Following the slump in fundraising due to the pandemic, Vetlife were delighted to see an uplift in fundraising activity in 2022 with **£646,406** (71% of total income) received in donations.

To mark the 30th anniversary of Vetlife Helpline, 'Vetlife Day' was launched supported by sponsorship from Virbac UK. This initiative was developed to encourage the veterinary community to choose just one day to fundraise for Vetlife. A total of **£52,129** was raised from this campaign in 2022.

Other notable fundraisers in 2022 include:

- Vets **Rachel Nixon** and **Lawrence Dodi** (and English Springer spaniel Peggy Sue) who challenged themselves to drive 100,000km through Europe, Central Asia, North and South America in an ambulance.
- **Laura Massey-Pugh** and her husband **Steve**, who achieved a new Guinness World record and raised **£5,591** for Vetlife by cycling 18,100 miles round the world in 179 days on their SteLa Tandem.
- **Kate McMorris** and her horse Marilyn who rode 1,300 miles from North to South of the UK in support Vetlife.

Vetlife likes to thank donors on its social media channels, in its monthly newsletter and, for donations over £5,000, supporters will feature on the Corporate Supporters page of the Vetlife website.

Donations of over **£10,000** in a year are gratefully acknowledged by at least one full page advert in key veterinary publications including Veterinary Record and the Vet Times.

Generous donations of over **£20,000** are announced via press release to the veterinary media (subject to donor's approval) and also receive our public thanks in a full page advert in the veterinary press. These donors also feature in our annual Impact Report.



**In 2022 £646,406
(71% of total income)
was received in donations.**



raising awareness

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn were used extensively to raise awareness of the charity and the issues for which it offers support.

By close of 2022:

 had **10,094** likes;

 had **7,644** followers;

 had **1,120** followers;

 had **740** followers.

The total reach for Vetlife content in 2022 on Facebook was **174,485**, and on Twitter was **157,242**.

Vetlife thanks all its supporters who share Vetlife posts and messaging through their marketing channels, providing a superb way to support the charity.

Vetlife also thanks the following publications for their support in provision of promotional space:

Vet Record

Vet Times

Veterinary Edge

MRCVS Online

VN Online

In Practice

Vet Nurse Times

BVA News

Improve Veterinary Practice



thank you

Vetlife offers special thanks for their generosity in 2022 to the following supporters:

CVS (UK) Limited

The Dashlight Foundation

IVC Evidensia

Linnaeus Veterinary Limited

Pets at Home Group plc

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

Veterinary Defence Society Limited

For more information on supporting Vetlife,
please visit www.vetlife.org.uk or email
info@vetlife.org.uk.

