

vetlife

Support for the
veterinary community

Become a Vetlife Ambassador



How you can help
us continue our
mission

www.vetlife.org.uk

vetlife

Support for the
veterinary community

'It's good to represent Vetlife at various meetings and talks. I get to meet and discuss things with all sorts of interesting people. Our profession is full of committed and resourceful individuals and there are many ways in which we can all support each other.'

Jane Coatesworth
Vetlife Ambassador



020 7908 6385

info@vetlife.org.uk
www.vetlife.org.uk



Thank you

Dear Future Ambassador,

Thank you for expressing your interest in supporting our great charity. Vetlife received more than 4,000 contacts to our Helpline in 2023. We see referrals to our Financial Support service at an all-time high, with more than one person each week coming through the process of working with our regional Area Representatives to apply for support.

Vetlife can only keep the show on the road by tirelessly fundraising and raising awareness of the need for, and importance of the work that we do. Roughly 1 in 8 of our callers will be actively suicidal at the time that they contact us, so our 24-7 presence is imperative.

What is also imperative is that Vetlife is seen to support everybody within the very broad church of the veterinary family. We do not decide who to support based on employee or employer, corporate or independent, pro-XL Bullies or against, or any other characteristic which might define an individual in our community. As an Ambassador for the charity, you will be comfortable in welcoming anybody who needs us into the support of Vetlife. You will be able to put aside preconceptions and beliefs to embrace the humanity you will meet.

Doing this is a special and rewarding task. Vetlife is widely loved by our community, and you will feel that love when you don the green t-shirt.

Thank you for wanting to be part of this incredible team.

With warmest regards,

Thank you.

James Russell

Vetlife President



Who we help

We help all those in the veterinary community who contact the Vetlife Helpline for free, independent and confidential support, including veterinary nurses, veterinary students, office and administration staff.

Vetlife Financial Support is available to eligible veterinary surgeons, registered veterinary nurses and their dependents.

Vetlife Health Support is available to veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and veterinary students.

You do not need to be a member of Vetlife or any other veterinary organisation to access our support services.



“With ongoing support from Vetlife Health Support, my workplace, a wonderful boyfriend and my family, I am doing things with my life that I never thought would be possible.”



Supporting Vetlife as a volunteer

Vetlife is almost entirely managed and run by its volunteers.



Vetlife Helpline

Our Helpline is an empathetic listening service manned by volunteers from the profession who have undergone a selection and training process. The rota is flexible, allowing you to select which days you prefer to be on duty so you can combine this with normal daily commitments.



Please contact Vetlife through our website if you are interested and we will arrange for you to speak to a member of the Helpline's selection and training team.

www.vetlife.org.uk/become-a-helpline-volunteer/



financial
support

Vetlife Financial Support Area Representative

As a Vetlife volunteer, you would join a network of Vetlife Area Representatives throughout the UK. Area Reps provide the interface between Vetlife and those members of the veterinary profession, their relatives and dependents who benefit from its services.

You would use your experience of the veterinary profession to help ensure appropriate support is directed to existing and new beneficiaries in need.

Area Representatives often deal with vulnerable people who may be very sensitive, so tact and discretion are essential. You will therefore go through an induction and training will be provided.

The role can be challenging but also rewarding, with the opportunity to positively impact the lives of members of the profession who may be in need.

If you are interested in becoming a Vetlife Financial Support Area Representative please email info@vetlife.org.uk.



Board of Trustees

The Trustees' election is announced in the veterinary press every year and candidates then elected by Vetlife Members before the Annual General Meeting. An induction for successful applicants will take place shortly after the AGM.

Trustees serve one term of 3 years and may choose to stand for a second term. There are 4 Board meetings every year which Trustees are required to attend and to take on management responsibilities meaning the time commitment can be substantial.

To learn more about becoming a Vetlife trustee, visit

www.vetlife.org.uk/support-us/volunteer

Supporting Vetlife as an Ambassador

There are many valuable and essential ways you can help us as a Vetlife Ambassador.



Being a Vetlife volunteer is an important and rewarding experience; you know that you're making a real change in someone's life. If you are not already a volunteer, would you like to attend veterinary events and help us spread awareness of the outstanding support our charity provides?

As an Ambassador, you will be helping to ensure that more people are aware of the support we offer, and letting those who may be struggling know that we are here to help.

Raising awareness, encouraging others to get involved with fundraising activities and reaching new people are all essential ways that Ambassadors can help our Charity. All talks and events are arranged via the Vetlife office; if you are aware of an organisation which would like to arrange a talk, or provide stand space free of charge, please get in touch. We provide Ambassadors with the tools and resources they need to attend events, deliver talks and presentations effectively and professionally and are here to support you along the way. So, if you are interested in becoming a Vetlife Ambassador, apply here - www.vetlife.org.uk/become-an-ambassador or get in touch with us at info@vetlife.org.uk.

“I like to volunteer for events so that I can chat to a wide range of practice personnel and keep abroad of what is happening in the veterinary industry and the current issues. Event volunteering is also a great opportunity to meet some of the Vetlife staff and other volunteers.”

Maurice Kelly, Vetlife Ambassador



What We Do



24/7,
365 days

Vetlife Helpline

The Vetlife Helpline offers confidential emotional support to everyone in the veterinary community. We don't judge, or tell people what to do, but will listen and give our time and space to explore a way forward. We can also make referrals to specialist help if needed or offer other available options.

- Helpline is available 24 hours a day to anyone in the veterinary community, this includes vets, vet nurses, students, practice managers, VCAs, support staff, and others.
- All phone calls are live-answered, if the helper on duty is busy we may take a message and call back, but will call back within an hour.
- All emails are responded to within 24 hours.
- Vetlife Helpline is completely confidential and non-judgemental. We listen, explore options, and where needed can signpost to other services.
- Everything said to Vetlife Helpline is confidential - it is a safe place to talk.



Anything you say to us is completely confidential and you don't have to use your real name.





Health support

Vetlife Health Support is here to offer free help to vets, vet nurses or veterinary students experiencing mental health difficulties, including, but not limited to:



Vetlife Health Support is made up of a team of professionals: psychiatrists; mental health nurses; and therapists who have years of experience working in mental health.

Their recommendations and any treatment will be based on what has been proven to be successful, backed up by the latest evidence and research.

A man with dark hair, wearing a blue polo shirt, is shown in profile from the chest up, looking intently through the eyepiece of a white and black Leica microscope. The microscope is positioned on a white surface. The background is a plain, light-colored wall with a light switch. A large, light green speech bubble is overlaid on the lower right portion of the image, containing white text.

Our mental health professionals will offer an assessment and advice or care management; guiding and supporting you to ensure you get the care that you need

Financial Support

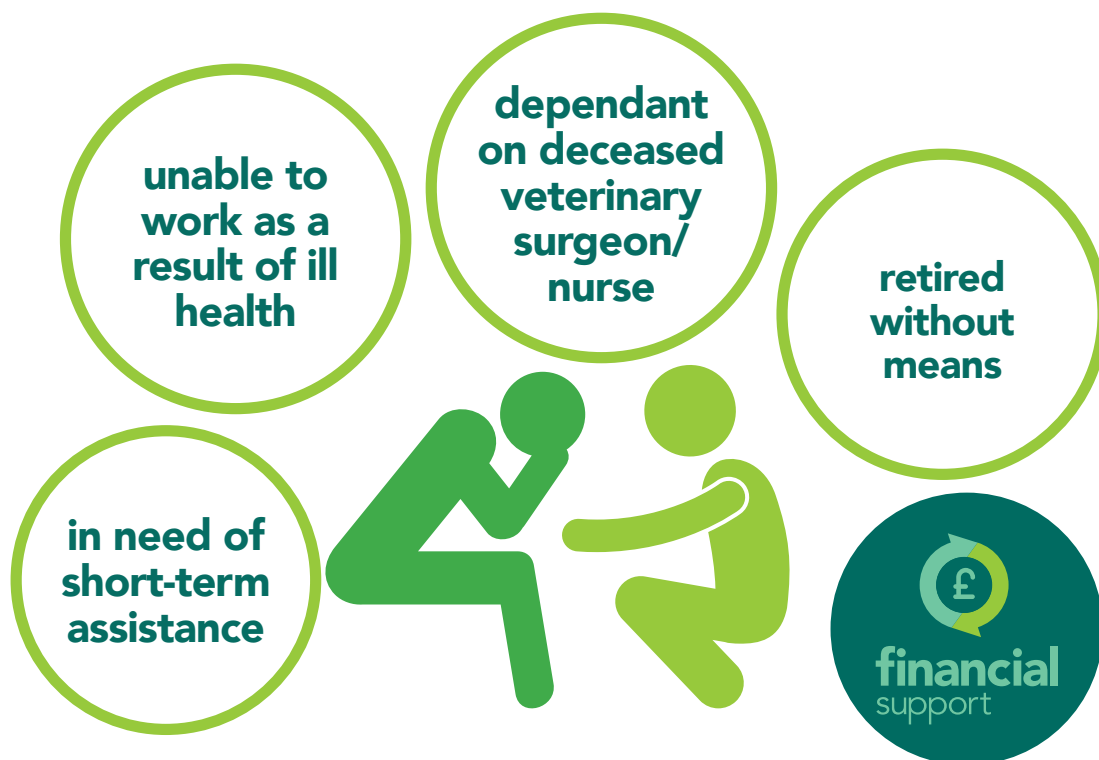
There are times in many of our lives when we run into financial difficulties. Usually because of a major change of some kind, such as a health problem or the breakdown of a relationship. Vetlife will look at all of your circumstances in order to understand your financial issues better and will help you to plan a way forward.

Vetlife is currently only able to offer Financial Support to veterinary surgeons, registered veterinary nurses and their dependants that are resident in the UK.

What sort of help is given?

- **Emergency assistance**
- **Regular monthly grants**
- **One-off gifts**
- **Professional advice on State benefits and debt**
- **Access to CPD**
- **Bungalow accommodation in Dorset**

Applications for support are considered from any UK resident, currently or previously registered as a veterinary surgeon, veterinary nurse, or a dependant who is :-



A woman with long blonde hair, wearing blue scrubs, is looking upwards and to the right. She is in a clinical or hospital setting, with shelves of medical supplies visible in the background. A large green speech bubble is overlaid on the image, containing a testimonial.

“ Vetlife are an essential part of my support system – not just for the financial help but because I know that they have always done all they can to support me and I have grown to trust them... ”

Who we are

EXECUTIVE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

James Russell President	Paul Horwood Honorary Treasurer	John Chitty Honorary Secretary	Nichola Saunders Chair of Vetlife Health Support	Robyn Lowe Chair of Vetlife Helpline
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BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Danny Chambers Trustee	Paul Freeman Trustee	Liz Barton Trustee	Kelly Blacklock Trustee	Kirstie Pickles Trustee	Jo Oakden Trustee	James Glass Trustee
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The Board of Vetlife consists of a maximum of 12 Trustees, appointed by the members of the Charity. A maximum of 5 of these Trustees are elected by the Board as officers and comprise the Charity Executive representing key areas addressed by the charity.

VETLIFE STAFF

Derek Thorpe Company Secretary	Joanne Driver Head of Operations	Sabrina Singh Administrator	Kemi Animashaun Financial Support Manager	Eve Ritchie Communications Officer	Michelle Gratton Donor Relations Manager	Alethea Hawley Financial Support Administrator
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The Vetlife permanent employed staff are based in offices co-located in the building of the British Veterinary Association (BVA), Mansfield Street, London. The Company Secretary is also engaged by the BVA, with relevant time allocation recovered from Vetlife.



External partners

March on Stress

March on Stress (MoS) is a psychological health consultancy selected following extensive review of support needs and available resources in 2016. This followed a Request for Quotation (RFQ) process conducted by Vetlife amongst potential suitable service suppliers. MoS delivers Vetlife's Health Support service providing the necessary counselling and support services to those identified as likely to benefit from this assistance.

Money Penny

Money Penny – is one of the largest telephone answering and remote Personal Assistant (PA) services enabling rapid and fully confidential initial response to inbound contacts to the Helpline contact points (Telephone and e-mail). A dedicated line ensures that callers are logged and encrypted to enable a confidential call back connection by a duty Helpline volunteer 365 24/7.

Dr Rosie Allister

Dr Rosie Allister - Helpline Manager, is a veterinary lecturer at the Royal Dick Vet School in Edinburgh. She is a researcher in mental health and wellbeing. She has been a volunteer on Helpline since 2008 and has led Helpline since 2010.

“The service has been amazing at a point in time when I need it.”



What is the history of Vetlife?

The Veterinary Mutual Defence Society was founded by a small group of veterinary surgeons. This later became The National Veterinary Benevolent & Mutual Defence Society (The National).

They became The Veterinary Benevolent Fund (VBF) and the mutual defence arm of The National was spun off as The Veterinary Defence Society (VDS) – though to this day VDS has continued its benevolence as a generous supporter of VBF/Vetlife.

The VBF developed and expanded over the years but remained dedicated to the support of the veterinary community.

The Veterinary Surgeons' Health Support Programme (VSHSP) was established as an RCVS initiative. Its initial purpose was to provide support and treatment for veterinary surgeons facing allegations of professional misconduct as a result of the misuse of alcohol, other substances abuse and/or mental health problems. Funding was provided mainly by RCVS, with additional generous annual contributions from VDS.

1865

1897

A second fund, The Victoria Veterinary Benevolent Fund, began in 1897. These two funds worked alongside each other for around the next 80 years until they merged in 1977.

1978

1992

A separate veterinary Helpline was created, which reflected the need within the veterinary community to have somewhere specific to turn at times of emotional or mental need.

1998

2005

Vet Helpline and VSHSP were taken under the wing of VBF when all three organisations merged as a single charity.

2015

VBF rebranded as Vetlife with its three integrated component functions now known as: Vetlife Helpline, Vetlife Health Support and Vetlife Financial Support.

vetlife
today






Tools for talks: Hints & Tips

Vetlife talks are usually organised by Vetlife office staff. Ambassadors will be contacted if there is an opportunity to represent Vetlife at a talk or event. If you would like to organise your own presentation, for example to your colleagues, please let us know.

Structure your Vetlife Ambassador presentation in the following way:

- **History of Vetlife**
- **Key messages about Vetlife services**
- **Our philosophy**
- **Ways you can help**
 - Community events
 - Legacy
 - Appeals and raffles
 - Challenges
 - General donations & In Memory Giving
- **Questions**



The Vetlife Ambassador presentation must be used when delivering a Vetlife talk. FAQ's and other useful resources can be found on our secure online workspace

Key words that you may wish to highlight:

- **Support**
- **Confidential**
- **Health**
- **Non judgemental**
- **24/7, 365 days**
- **Listening**

Key messages

- Vetlife provides independent, confidential and free help via the 24/7/365 Vetlife Helpline.
- Everyone in the veterinary community is welcome to contact the Helpline for support. The Helpline is run by trained volunteers, all of whom are veterinary professionals.
- Vetlife funds and manages Vetlife Health Support available to veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and students.
- Vetlife Financial Support available to veterinary surgeons, registered veterinary nurses and their dependants. Applications are means tested and all cases are considered according to individual circumstances.

Making a speech: do's and don'ts

1. Tailor your message to the audience

2. Firsts and Lasts are remembered

Your introduction and closing words are the most important part of the speech – think carefully and rehearse.

3. Movement & Change

Move around, use gestures, use your voice to emphasise points and create impact.

4. Simple language & strong words

Use easy to say and simple to understand words.

Don't use weak words such as "try", "hopefully" and "might".

5. Paint pictures / use stories

Make it memorable, help people relate to what you are saying. Create emotion.

6. Smile / Breathe / Pause

Relax - nervous people forget to smile!

Pause for dramatic effect - say a sentence / tell a story then PAUSE for a few seconds. Stillness & quiet is very powerful.

7. Make eye contact

Don't stare blindly into the room. Pick out people in the audience, work the room.

8. Control the Q&A session

Don't leave this session to the very end as you cannot control it. Ensure your closing statement comes after all the questions.

9. Rehearse

Even the most experienced actors rehearse - make time. Especially important are the intro and outro.

10. Do not overrun on time

No one is ever thanked for going over time!

Resources and equipment available

All volunteers can request Vetlife promotional materials such as posters, stickers, flyers and contact cards by emailing: info@vetlife.org.uk.

- Contact cards
- Posters
- Tote bags
- Leaflets
- Stickers
- Powerpoint presentation
- Pull-up banner
- T-shirts and hoodies



Get in touch

If you are interested in giving a talk to a specific organisation, please email the Vetlife office staff and they can make arrangements.

Please contact us by email
info@vetlife.org.uk

Thank you for considering becoming a Vetlife Ambassador. Your support means that we can spread awareness of our services to the veterinary community!



I vetlife

vetlife

Support for the
veterinary community

 Vetlifecharity  @VetlifeUK
 @VetlifeUK  @vetlife-support

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