

Guidance notes

Financial Support Application

Whilst the Financial Support Application Form contains many explanatory notes throughout as an aid to completion, these supplementary notes have been produced as further aid to understanding the reason we ask for certain information and the application process. If you still require clarification before submitting your application, please get in touch using one of the above methods.

Please note the following important information:

- Read the guidance notes and all supporting information before starting your application.
- Complete all the sections of the application form relevant to you, providing as much information as you can as we are not able to process incomplete applications. If an application is incomplete this may result in a delay in processing it.
- All information that you provide will be treated confidentially however we recommend that all applicants read the Data Protection Statement.

Eligibility:

- Previously or currently registered veterinary surgeons or registered veterinary nurses; retired veterinary surgeons or registered veterinary nurses, and the dependants of veterinary surgeons or registered veterinary nurses needing short-term assistance able to:
 - Demonstrate a genuine shortfall between income and expenditure.
 - Demonstrate that all other available options have been exhausted.

Section 1 | Preliminary Check

Checklist

This section sets out the minimum information required for a valid application. If you have answered "No" to any question, then please contact the Vetlife office before completing the rest of the application.

MRCVS and RVN

Where did you hear about us?

It could be that you heard about us through a friend or on our website. Either way, we would love to know.

In this section, we require only the details of the member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons or Registered Veterinary Nurse. If you are a dependant, please specify your relationship to a member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons or Registered Veterinary Nurse.

Section 2 | About you and your family

Title

E.g. Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr.

Date of Birth (DOB)/Age

As recorded in your birth certificate. Format example DD/MM/YYYY. This is useful for us to know. For example, if you are nearing retirement this is likely to have an impact on your finances and will be taken into account as part of your assessment.

Name

Please provide your first and family name. You might choose to put in brackets the name you would prefer us to use in correspondence with you, if this is different. If you have applied before using a different name, please tell us that name also.

Place of birth

This must be the town or city in which you were born.

Marital Status/ Spouse/Partner

E.g. Single, married, civil partnership, partner, divorced, widowed/surviving civil partner, separated. If applicable, please provide your spouse's/partner's given and family name. Please also provide their DOB, age, address and contact information.

Personal details

We may contact you about your application via post, email or telephone. It is important that you provide accurate details and inform us of any changes. We can only contact the applicant – if you are acting on behalf of someone, we will require a Power of Attorney or letter from the applicant confirming that correspondence can be entered into on their behalf. If this is not provided, correspondence will be with the applicant only.

Who lives with you?

For each person, please provide their full name, DOB or age and their income and/or contribution if applicable. Please also include your relation to the applicant. This information helps us to establish what other help may be available for you and your family and ensures that your State Benefits and allowances are properly assessed.

Financial responsibility

If you are financially responsible for someone not living in your home please tell us their name, relationship to you and the level and reason for the financial support.

Section 3 | About your finances

Income

It is important to complete the tables as accurately as possible to give a true reflection of your situation. This section is where you should list any money you receive. This includes any benefits, payments from family and pension you may receive. Before completing the income section, we strongly recommend that applicants have in hand their most recent bank statements or payslips. This is so that the information is correctly transferred onto the application form. If a section is not relevant to you, please leave it blank. *Please leave the "Total" blank for office use.*

Savings and capital

Do you have savings, property or other income, for example, stocks and shares? If so, please indicate the total amount in the table. We ask for full details of capital and savings so that we can understand your financial situation.

Details of housing

Please provide details of the property you own or rent.

Expenditure

You do not have to fill in every box. If a section is not relevant to you, please leave it blank. If you are unsure about an amount, try to find this out before you complete the form (refer to your bank statements, bills or contact the organisation directly). *Please leave the "Total" blank for office use.*

Section 4 | Debts

Please list all current debts along with any payment you are currently making towards them. As with all other parts of the form, this section must be completed even if the applicant is not requesting help with debts. This information helps us to understand the financial pressure an applicant may be experiencing. Furthermore, since debt is often a contributory factor, support and advice can be offered through our debt advice service or other organisations where it is felt that this will help achieve a long-term solution.

Section 5 | Why do you need financial assistance?

This section gives applicants an opportunity to explain why financial assistance is required. You may wish to include for how long you think you might require assistance. It is important that you include details of loss of income and other difficulties that have led to the current problems. You may wish to continue on another sheet if necessary.

Please note if this part of the form is insufficiently completed, it may affect how quickly we can reach a decision.

Section 6 & 7 | Checklist – Account details & Documents required

If awarded a grant, we require your bank details in order to process grants awarded to you.

Applications will not be considered until all supporting documentation has been received. It is therefore important to find the relevant paperwork before sending us your form as it will not be assessed without it. *If you are unable to send original hard copies, PDF's or copies may be accepted.*

- The last **three months' statements for all bank/building society/saving accounts and credit card accounts held by you, your partner and all other members of your household aged 18+**
- A copy of a letter from DWP with all details of any state benefits you are receiving
- A recent mortgage/rent statement
- Proof of Debts (Copies of letters where you have outstanding bills)
- Proof of marriage to MRCVS or RVN (If applicable)
- Proof of parentage by MRCVS or RVN (If applicable)
- Photographic proof of Identification (Passport or Driving Licence)
- Power of Attorney (If applicable)

Section 8 | Data Protection and Declaration

Please read the declaration. You should make sure that you fully understand the declaration before signing it. We will only process your application if you have signed this declaration. This must be signed by the applicant personally and not by a representative or other person acting on his/her behalf unless you have power of attorney (supporting evidence will be required in this instance). Unsigned application forms **are not** acceptable and will be returned to the applicant. A digital signature is acceptable if you are submitting your form by email.

Section 9 | Appeals and Complaints

You have the right to appeal against the decision that you are not happy with. If you disagree with the decision of the Grant Awards Panel you are entitled to submit an appeal in writing within 14 days of the decision. You should do this by emailing info@vetlife.org.uk or writing to Vetlife Financial Support, 7 Mansfield Street, London, W1G 9NQ. Your appeal should include any additional evidence or mitigating circumstances which will be considered when reviewing the decision.

What happens next?

- We will begin processing a complete application within 2 days of receiving it;
- We will verify that the information you have provided is accurate e.g. checking bank statements;
- We will assess your eligibility;
- We may arrange for you to meet a Vetlife Area Representative in person or online;
- For those in urgent need of help, an initial payment may be made immediately;
- For others, a regular grant or one-off special gift may be awarded;
- Awards are made throughout the year and are then reviewed;
- We will confirm the amount of all grants awarded, along with the timescale, in writing;
- You will be informed if your application has not been successful because your circumstances do not meet Vetlife's criteria of need;
- If we cannot reach a decision based on the information in your application, we may ask you to provide further information. If so, we will write to you to explain what information is required.