

impact report

2025

vetlife

Support for the
veterinary community

foreword

I am sure that there will be a year in my presidency when I do not open our impact report by stating that it has been the busiest year on record for Vetlife, but it is not this year.

Another 27% rise in contacts to our Helpline, a significant increase in Financial Support applications, coupled with an increase in the numbers referred to Health Support. A dramatic increase in the complexity of those cases has meant that the time spent with our clinicians has seen a major uptick in the financial requirements of our charity.

Achieving this level of support for the veterinary communities has been achieved through the work and dedication of our office team which has expanded slightly to absorb increased demand. This is replicated by our amazing contractors on Helpline, and the team of now over 100 Helpline and Postvention volunteers that they support. Our Area Rep team, the face of the charity for those applying for Financial Support, have increased in number and improve even further their service to our beneficiaries.

I have found a great deal of joy in sharing our most recent resource looking at moral injury, burnout and compassion fatigue. This is available for free from our website shop and our ambassadors have also done an amazing job of sharing this at conferences and CPD events.

For us to continue to provide this level of support, and to go further in 2026 developing resources to support workplaces seeking to achieve the compulsory RCVS PSS requirement to have in place a suicide prevention strategy, we need more than ever, the support of you in our professions. If each person regulated by the Royal College were to sign up to our £1 per month campaign, then we would double the support we are able to give to our community.

Thank you for reading this report and thank you also for the important role you play in fulfilling our profession's obligations to animals, keepers, owners and each other.



James Russell
Vetlife 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 and their family members are aware of the sources of help and support should they, or a colleague, or a family member 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. 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 to anyone in the veterinary community or their family members by phone or anonymous email via the website. Support is provided by trained volunteers; vet surgeons, veterinary nurses, and others who have knowledge of the veterinary profession. Callers are referred to Vetlife Health Support 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 available to vet, vet nurses and veterinary students and 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 gifts.



2025 delivery & outcomes

- Vetlife Helpline received 6,481 contacts (2024: 5,111). Of these, 4,370 (67%) were by email and 2,111 (33%) by phone. This is an average of 18 contacts per day.
- Vetlife Helpline volunteers gave 18,750 hours of time to support the veterinary community.
- A total of 233 (2024: 181) contacts were referred on to Vetlife Health Support for mental health support.
- 96 (2024: 82) new applications were received through Vetlife Financial Support.
- A new resource '**Burnout, moral injury and compassion fatigue**' was produced and widely distributed to support the veterinary community.
- Our talks team gave over 50 talks, reaching around 2,000 people. This included speaking at 16 Universities and colleges training vets and veterinary nurses, in support of student wellbeing.
- We exhibited at 21 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, through the work of the postvention team and the postvention guidance, 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.
- Two days of ongoing training for all Helpline volunteers was provided both online and in person with in person training focussing on caller centred listening, and support for callers in crisis including suicide prevention, and safeguarding. Online training covered safety planning for callers who may be suicidal, inclusive terminology, and postvention support (support after suicide loss).



2025 delivery & outcomes cont.

In March 2025, 28 volunteer Financial Support Area Representatives attended annual ongoing training. The training aimed to ensure volunteers remain confident, well-informed and appropriately supported in their roles, particularly as the complexity and volume of applications to the service continue to increase.

This training focused on standardising support, managing high-risk crises, and protecting volunteer wellbeing.

Core Training Outcomes included:

- **Operations & Governance:** Updated volunteers on Vetlife Financial Support policies and clarified the transparent decision-making roles of the Grant Awards Panel.
- **Safety & Safeguarding:** Established clear protocols for risk management and personal safety during visits, reinforced by scenario-based learning.
- **Crisis Management:** Trained representatives to recognise and signpost individuals in acute distress, specifically addressing suicidal ideation and complex mental health needs.

- **Role Clarity & Supervision:** Emphasised professional boundaries and introduced reflective practice to ensure consistent, compassionate service delivery.
- **Volunteer Wellbeing:** Highlighted the importance of self-care, outlining exactly how and when volunteers should access support for themselves.

Common themes of applications included ill health, relationship breakdowns, cost of living and debt which continue to impact applicants significantly.

We continue to provide grants for specific items and services for our Beneficiaries including, but not limited to, food vouchers, fuel support, moving costs, and access to specialist support with debt and State benefits.

Our aim remains to provide timely, meaningful and appropriate support to those who approach Vetlife Financial Support during times of financial difficulty.

Feedback from Financial Support Beneficiaries:

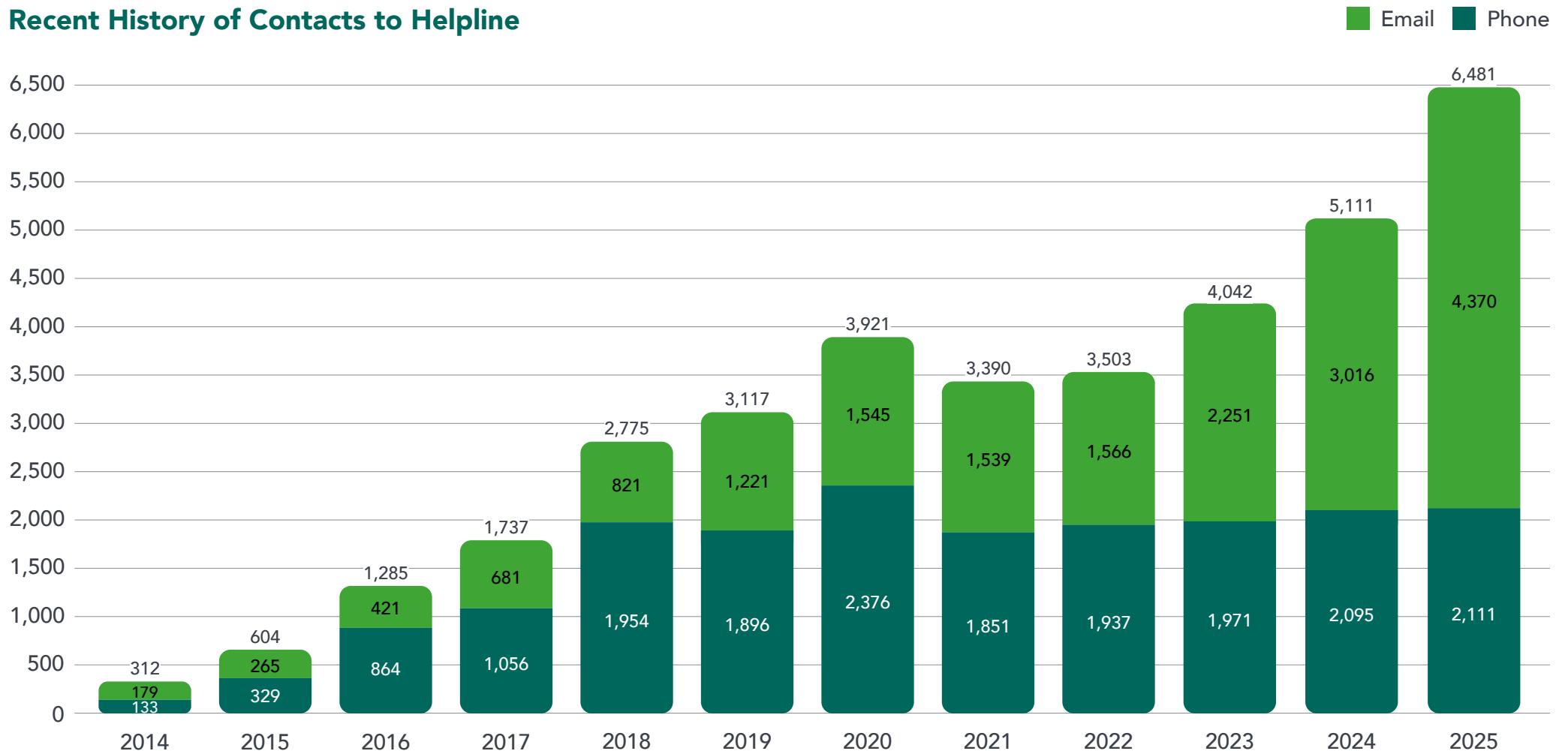


Vetlife has provided me with not only Financial Support, but also guidance regarding mental health. This has enabled me to see a way forward and alleviated a lot of my anxiety.

helpline contacts handled



Recent History of Contacts to Helpline



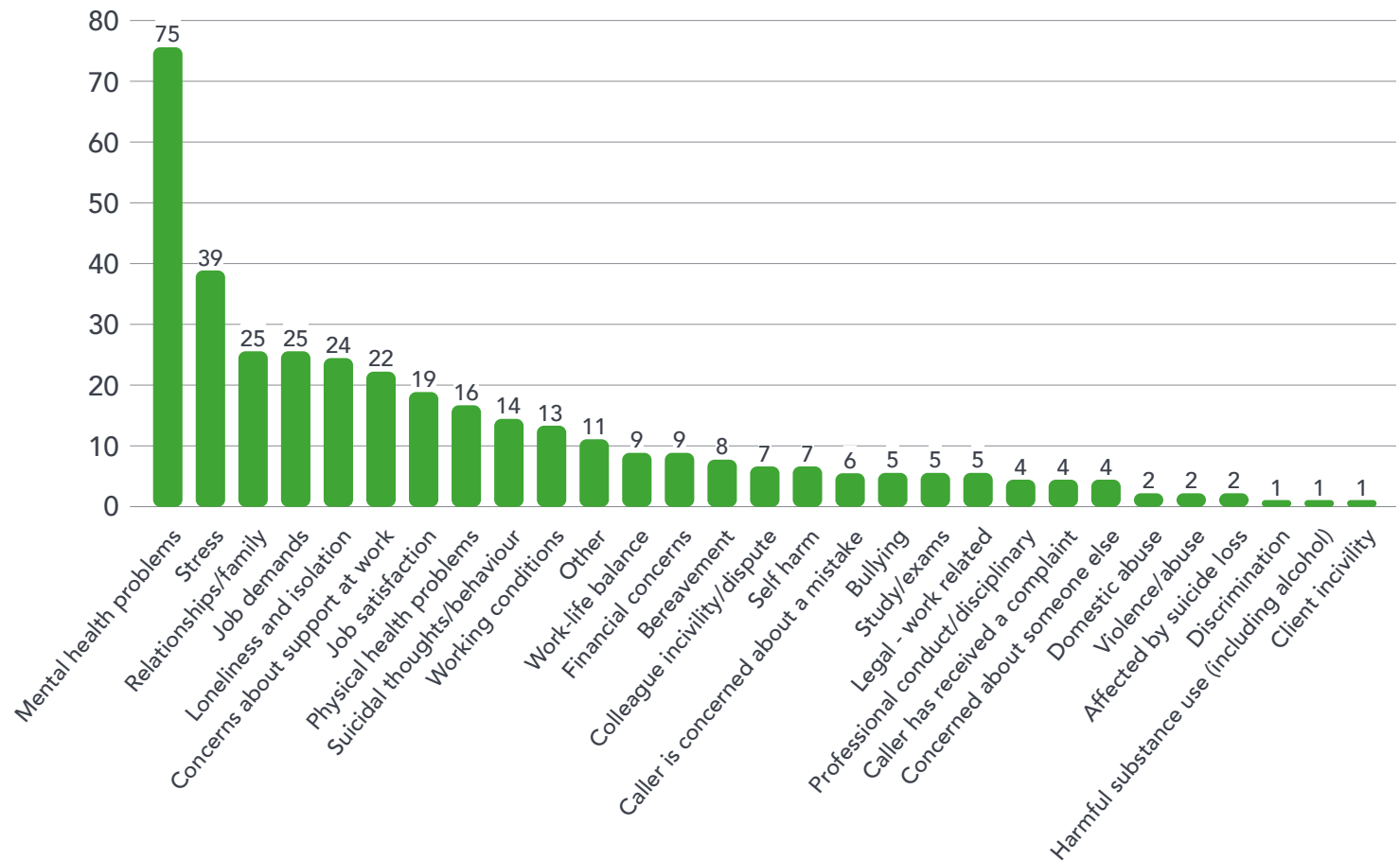
helpline call themes



During 2025 there were 6481 contacts to Vetlife Helpline. 67% (4370) of contacts were by email and 33% (2111) by phone.

- In 2025 where caller role was known, 38% of contacts were from veterinary nurses, 31% from veterinary surgeons, 8% veterinary students, 6% student veterinary nurses.
- Call themes reflected a wide range of reasons why people contact Vetlife Helpline encompassing health, personal, work and other concerns. Mental health concerns featured in 75% of contacts in 2025, and stress in 39%. Work related concerns were common and spread across multiple themes and categories.
- Vetlife Helpline has an important crisis support role with 14% of contacts in 2025 discussing suicidal thoughts or behaviour.

2025 helpline call themes

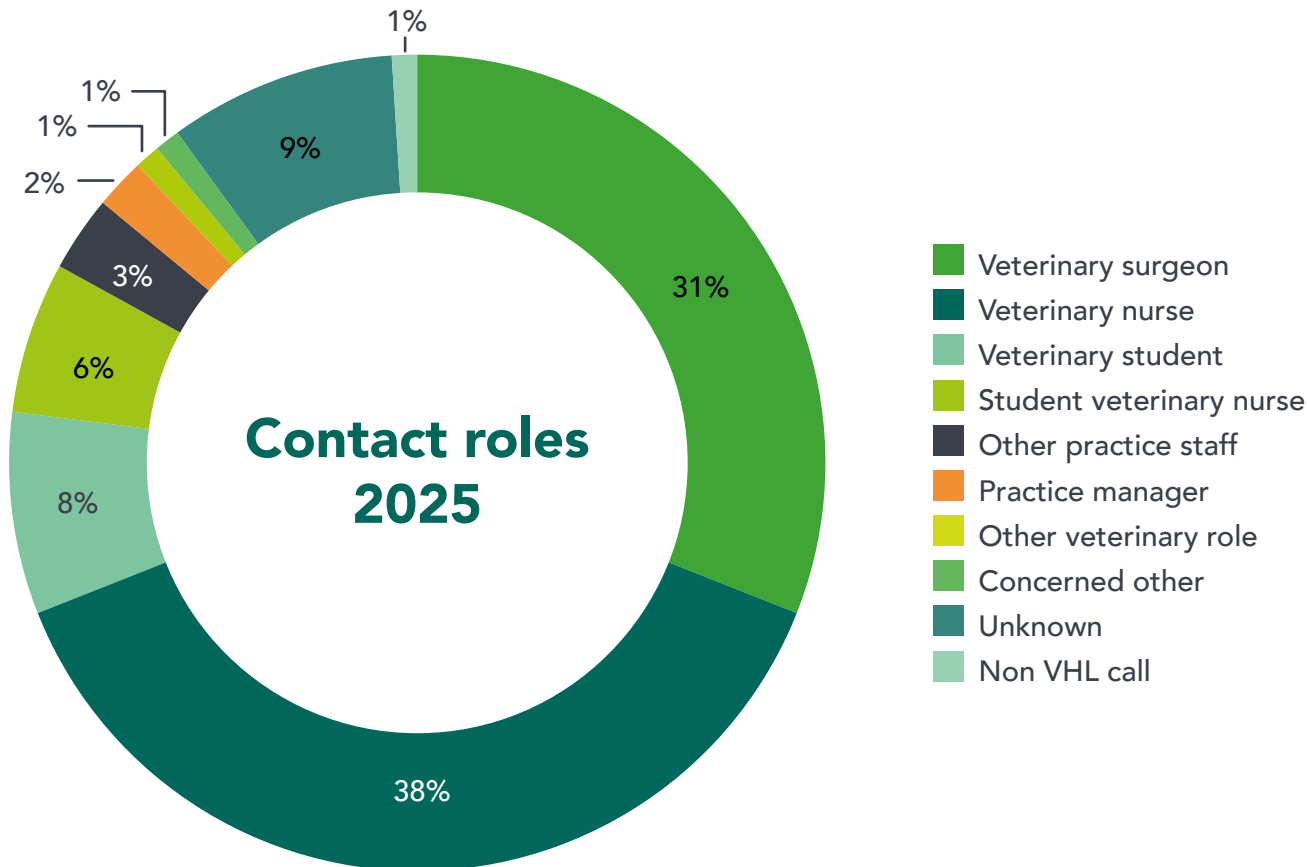


helpline call themes cont.



Roles of people who contact Vetlife Helpline

No identifying information about people who contact Vetlife Helpline is stored however we do note roles of callers where this is known.



Vetlife Helpline's email and phone services are experiencing their highest ever level of caller need in terms of contact numbers. Over the last ten years there has been a steady increase in the number of veterinary nurses using Vetlife's services.

Contacts are often complex reflecting multiple themes. Health, personal, and work concerns are common. Vetlife Helpline has an important crisis support role with 14% of contacts in 2025 discussing suicidal thoughts or behaviour.

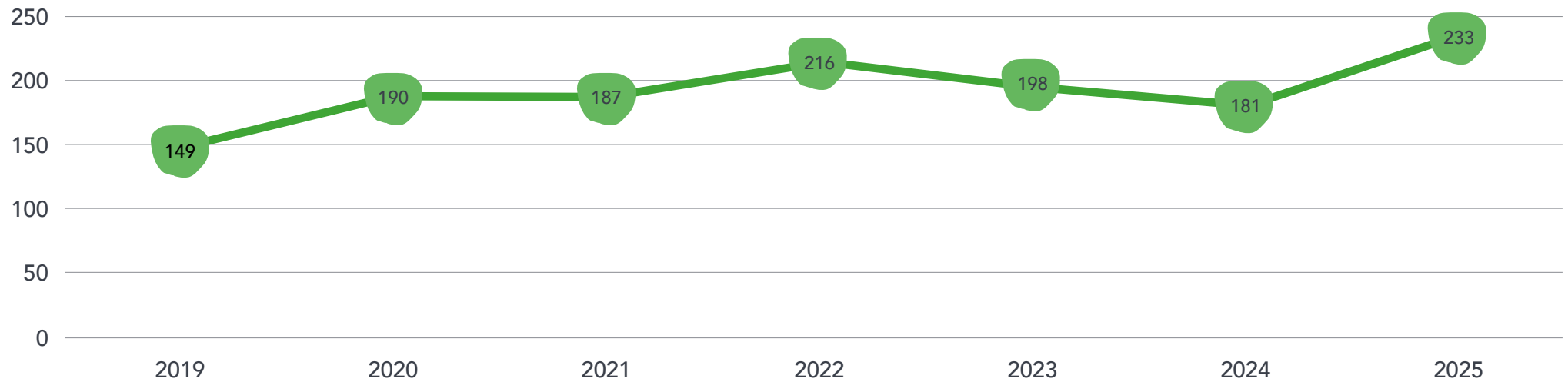
health support

referrals for mental health support



health
support

Recent History of Referrals for Mental Health Support

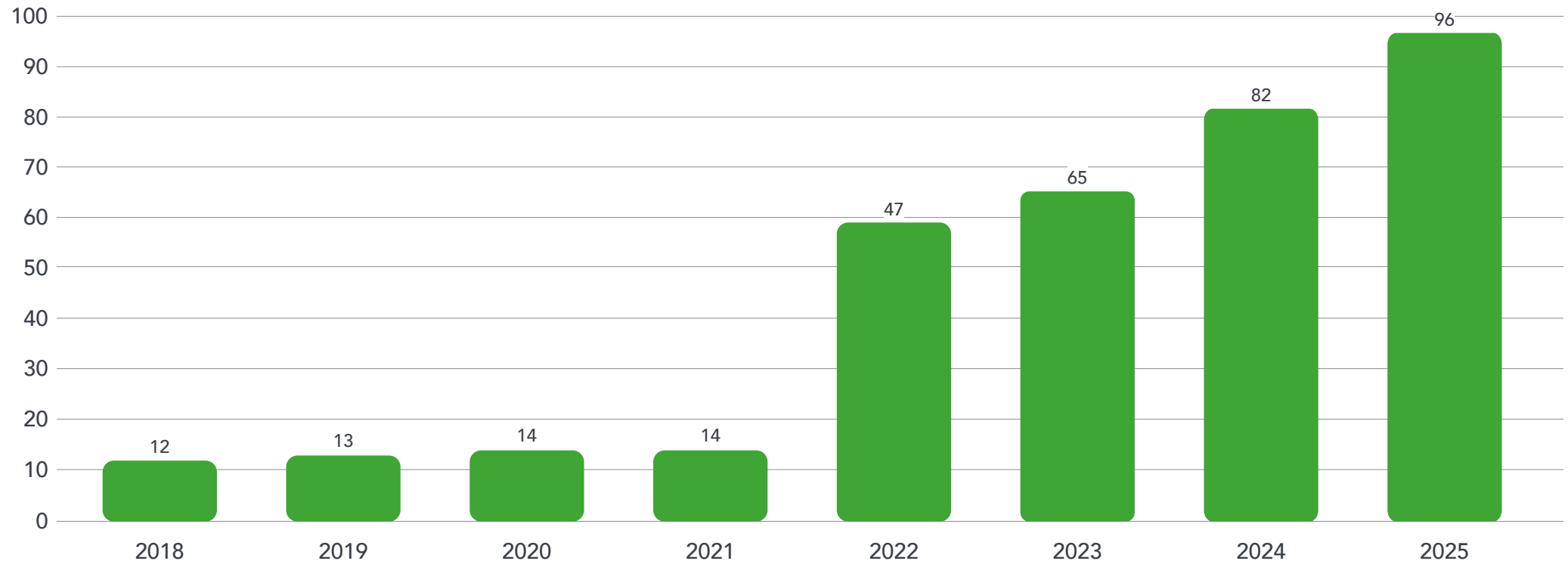


financial support applications



Vetlife has recorded unprecedented numbers of applications for financial support in 2025 by those in the veterinary community facing significant monetary difficulties. Total supportive grant payments exceeded £150,000.

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 our beneficiaries 2025



Solid coping strategies and good resources shared. Empathetic communication used with the ability to share as much or as little as necessary.



Everyone I spoke to was so kind and helpful, I really am so grateful. When I got in contact with Vetlife, I was really struggling, and having someone to talk to has helped me out so much.



Thank you for believing me, and for believing IN me.



I always felt listened to and never judged. I received the correct support and advice I needed to help my mental health. I was helped to find further support I needed.



Everyone at Vetlife, from start to finish, showed me what true care really looks like.



How quickly I could access help. This is so important, when you are at your most vulnerable, and really need someone, at the very worst possible time in your life, you have reassurance that you can always reach out to Vetlife and that you are not alone.

feedback from Safeguarding Audit 2025

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 2025 several areas of best practice were identified during the audit process, including the selection, supervision and training of our volunteers.

Some comments from the audit report:



*There are many areas of **best practice** which have been identified and highlighted within this audit document.*



The commitment and culture amongst the staff both employed, as volunteers or contracted personnel/ services was clear.



What was clear to the auditor was that all staff felt very passionate about Vetlife and its service provision. The culture and ethos around safeguarding is self-evident.



Burnout, moral injury and compassion fatigue

Vetlife was thrilled to launch a new resource on burnout, moral injury and compassion fatigue during 2025, made possible by Cencora Impact Foundation funding.



Our Resource Highlights



Blogs Featuring Lived Experiences

We shared a compelling series of blogs that delve into lived experience of veterinary professionals. These stories aim to shed light on the unique perspectives and challenges faced by individuals within our community.



Written Resource for the Whole Veterinary Community

With insights gathered from across the veterinary community, we have developed a comprehensive written resource which is freely available to all in the veterinary team including veterinary professionals, practice managers, employers, students and administrative team. We hope that this resource is useful for those wanting to explore these concepts and how to help colleagues who may be experiencing them, signposting information and support strategies.



Talks at Veterinary Conferences

Vetlife is proud to host a series of talks on our new resource at key veterinary conferences throughout the year. These engaging sessions shared best practice, insights and fostered open discussions around burnout, moral injury and compassion fatigue.

Our Sponsor – the Cencora Impact Foundation

We extend our sincere gratitude to the Cencora Impact Foundation for their grant funding enabling us to drive positive change within the veterinary community.

cencora
Impact Foundation

finances

At the start of 2025, the Trustees approved a prudent budget that anticipated a modest operating deficit, reflecting both rising demand for our services and wider economic pressures affecting the charitable sector.

I am pleased to report that, through careful financial management and the continued generosity of our supporters, Vetlife performed better than budget during the year. Although we closed 2025

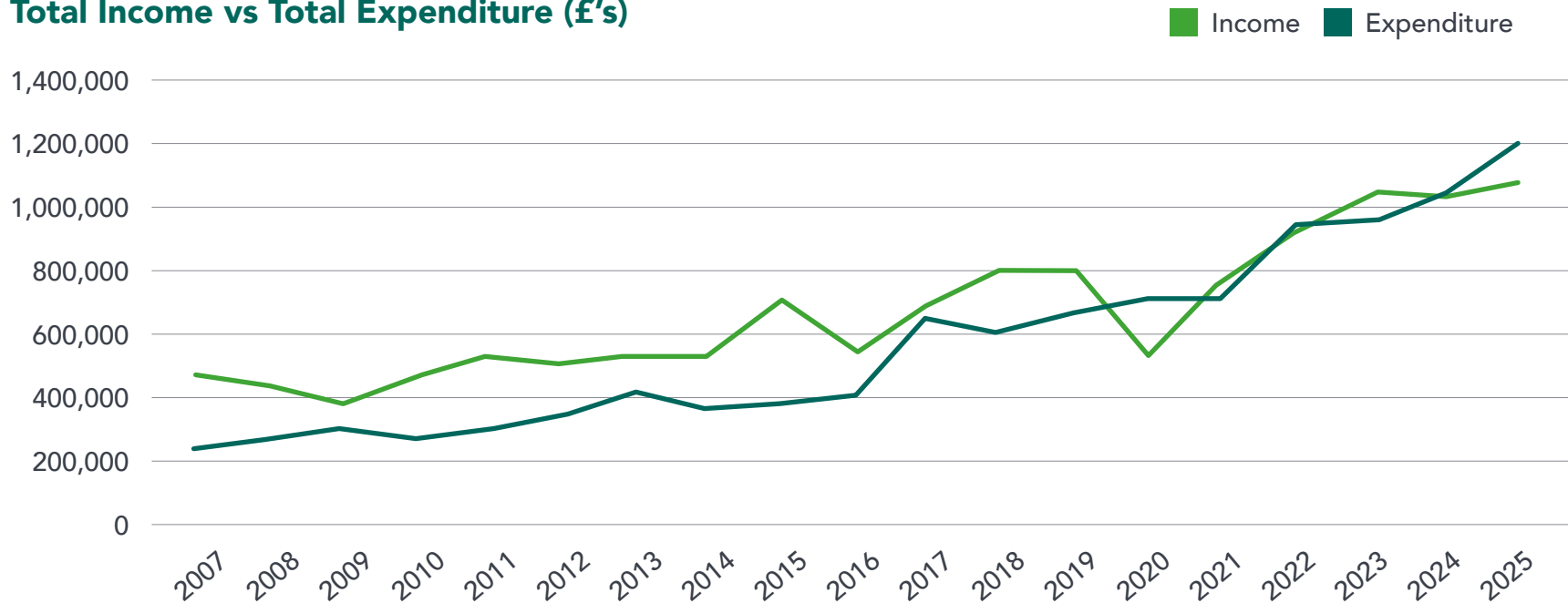
with a very slight operating deficit, this was an improvement on our original forecast and remains within our planned and sustainable parameters.

Maintaining this position while responding to increasing demand for our support services demonstrates both disciplined stewardship and the fantastic and generous commitment of the veterinary community to sustaining the charity's work. Our investment portfolio and reserves

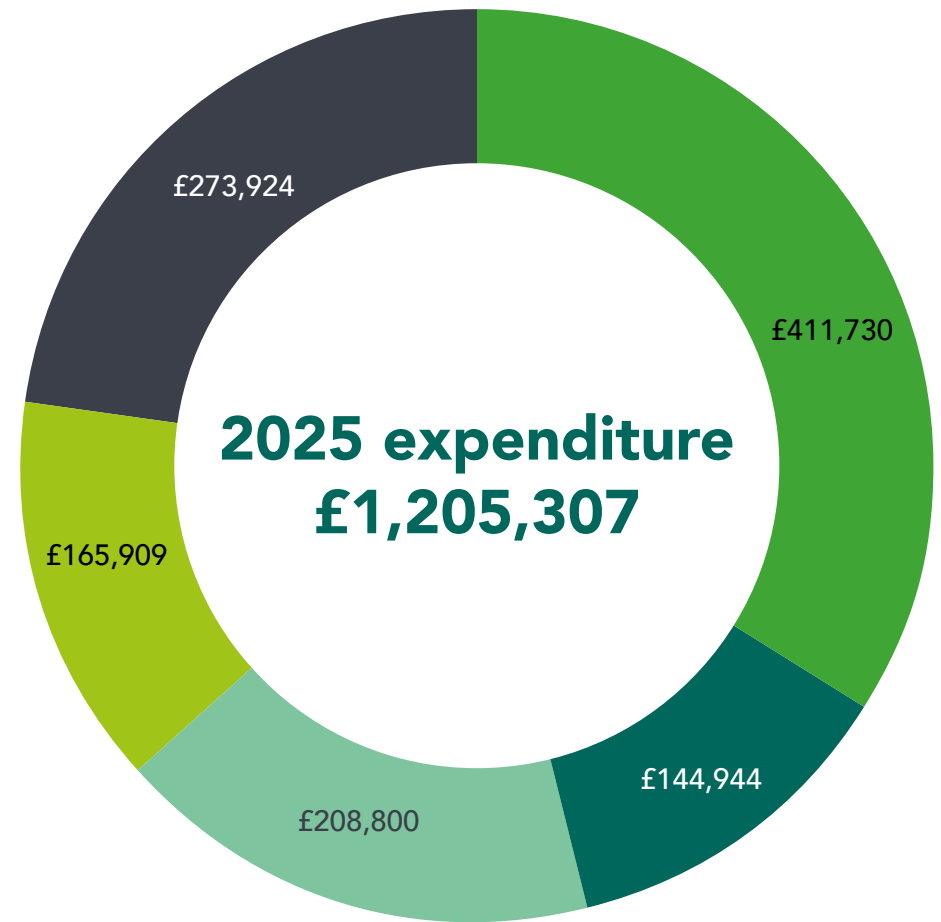
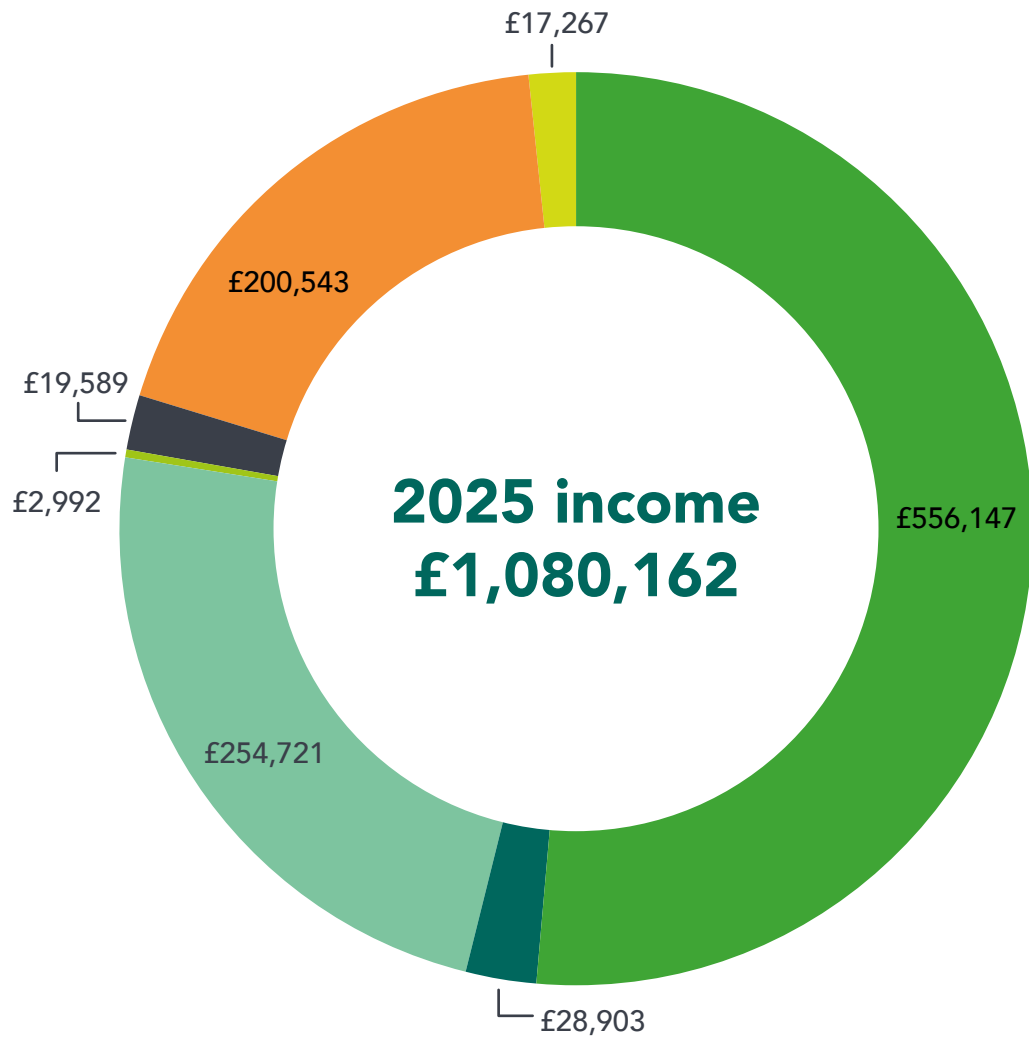
continue to provide important income stability, enabling us to manage short-term fluctuations responsibly while protecting long-term sustainability.

As we move forward, the Board remains focused on strengthening and diversifying income streams to ensure Vetlife can continue to provide confidential, independent support to members of the profession who need it most. Financial resilience will remain central to our strategy as we predict that demand for our services will continue to grow.

Total Income vs Total Expenditure (£'s)



Steady growth in income over 16 years has recovered following decline in Covid lockdown period helped by donations in 2023. 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

Draft unaudited figures

fundraising overview

Vetlife were delighted to see donations through fundraising activity in 2025 amount to **£556,147**.

Contributions from Vetlife Day and Active October initiatives made up part of this total.

Other notable fundraisers in 2025 include:

- **Tour de Vet School**

Vets Oscar and Caitlin Sinfield took on a 15-day challenge covering 1,000 miles to visit all 12 UK veterinary schools. Other members of the veterinary community joined along the way. The event raised over £7,000.

- **Vetlife Zipline Challenge**

VDS sponsored the Vetlife Zipline challenge in celebration of our shared 150-year history. The event raised over £7,000.

- **Vet Voices Hiking Group**

The Veterinary Voices Hiking Group hosted several hikes during 2025 and have now raised over £40k for our charity.

- **Donald McMillan** and friends **Mark, Julian** and **Pete** raised over £5,700 by cycling 1070 miles across France.

Vetlife likes to thank donors via its social media channels and monthly e-newsletter.

For donations of **£10,000** and above, supporter logos will feature on the Vetlife website.

Donations of over **£15,000** are gratefully acknowledged by full page advertisement 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 2025 **£556,147**
was donated through
fundraising activity.



raising awareness

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

By the close of 2025 Vetlife had:

 **13,406** followers;

 **7,826** followers;

 **4,252** followers;

 **7,386** followers.

The total reach for Vetlife content in 2025 on Facebook was **366,257**, X was **19,485**, Instagram was **44,431** and LinkedIn was **118,120**.

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 2025 to the following supporters:

CVS

Mind Matters Initiative

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons

The Cencora Impact Foundation

The Dashlight Foundation

The Zoetis Foundation

Veterinary Defence Society Limited

Vet Dynamics

VetPartners

Linnaeus

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

