

impact report

2024

vetlife
Support for the
veterinary community

foreword

Well, they've only gone and done it again. Another record-smashing year for our team at Mansfield Street – attending around 70 events during the year, and for our team of volunteers – responding to over 5,000 helpline contacts, and a record number of Financial Support applications.

I begin by thanking everybody involved in this ongoing work; donors, supporters, ambassadors, speech givers, volunteers, contractors, staff and trustees have pulled together to ensure that when people think about a charity to provide immediate support to veterinary teams, they think of Vetlife.

Our award winning neurodiversity resource has been flying out of the basement at Mansfield Street and making a real impact in veterinary workplaces. Our next resource is just around the corner, and I thank those who have given their time to ensure the unrivalled expertise in both.

As a Trustee of Vetlife, I am acutely aware of the budget deficit that we ran in 2024, and that we anticipate a similar gap in 2025. There is no complacency on our behalf, and we are working harder than ever to secure funding for our

charity every day of the year. I look forward to being able to announce an exciting new way of supporting Vetlife later in the year.

In the meantime, we continue to be inspired by the numerous and varied ways in which people raise funds for us. I particularly noticed in 2024 an increase in the non-physical activities being carried out to support us. I look forward to joining some of these, as well as getting out with the Vet Voices hiking group over coming months.

As a board we are looking forward to re-tendering for both our Helpline manager, and our Health Support provider in 2025 as part of the ongoing good governance of our charity. It is crucial that we keep a laser focus on being able to deliver our core services well as our charity grows in financial size.

I finish as ever with a sincere thank you for picking up this report and expressing an interest in this fantastic charity.



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 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 to anyone in the veterinary community 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 special gifts.



2024 delivery & outcomes

- Vetlife Helpline received 5,111 contacts (2023:4,042). Of these, 2,251 (56%) were by email and 1,971 (44%) by phone. This is an average of 14 contacts per day.
- Vetlife Helpline volunteers gave 18,750 hours of time to support the veterinary community.
- A total of 181 (2023:198) contacts were referred on to Vetlife Health Support for mental health support.
- 82 (2023:65) new applications were received through Vetlife Financial Support.
- A new expert led resource on neurodiversity was produced and widely distributed to support the veterinary community - **'Breaking Barriers, Bridging Understanding'**.
- The Vetlife Talks Team provided 33 talks including speaking at 7 vet schools and 9 veterinary nursing schools to support 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 16 new volunteers.
- Ongoing training for all Vetlife Helpline volunteers was provided both online and in person. In person training focussed on supporting veterinary professionals facing workplace incivility, bullying, and discrimination. It also included advanced training on support for other volunteers and on responding to more challenging call scenarios, and safeguarding. Training online looked at neurodiversity awareness and support for neurodivergent veterinary professionals, also support for veterinary professionals experiencing domestic abuse and coercive control. As well as this, online training was held on technical training for email support. A further online training course was run for the Vetlife Helpline postvention team.



2024 delivery & outcomes cont.

A total of 25 volunteer Financial Support Area Representatives attended annual ongoing training in March 2024.

The National Autistic Society delivered an insightful one-hour session introducing volunteers to autism and the key areas of difference in autistic individuals. We found that in recent years, an increasing number of applicants have either been diagnosed with autism or are awaiting assessment.

Vetlife Health Support facilitated a full-day training session focused on mental health, supervision, and awareness around addictions. This session was designed to equip volunteers with the knowledge and confidence to support Beneficiaries facing mental health challenges.

In 2024, a total of 82 applications were made for financial support (2023:65). This signifies an increase of 26.15% in demand for financial support.

Common challenges such as ill health, relationship breakdowns, cost of living and debt 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.

We remain committed to supporting our Beneficiaries by ensuring our grant policy is regularly reviewed. We value feedback from the people we support and continually strive to improve our services. Our goal is to continue to grow and enhance our support where possible, ensuring that those approaching us for support receive the most appropriate help they need in a meaningful way.

Feedback from Financial Support Beneficiaries:



We were so grateful for the financial aid we were given.



(My Area Rep) was just so lovely and was a friendly familiar face. She was always understanding and reassuring when I spoke with her.

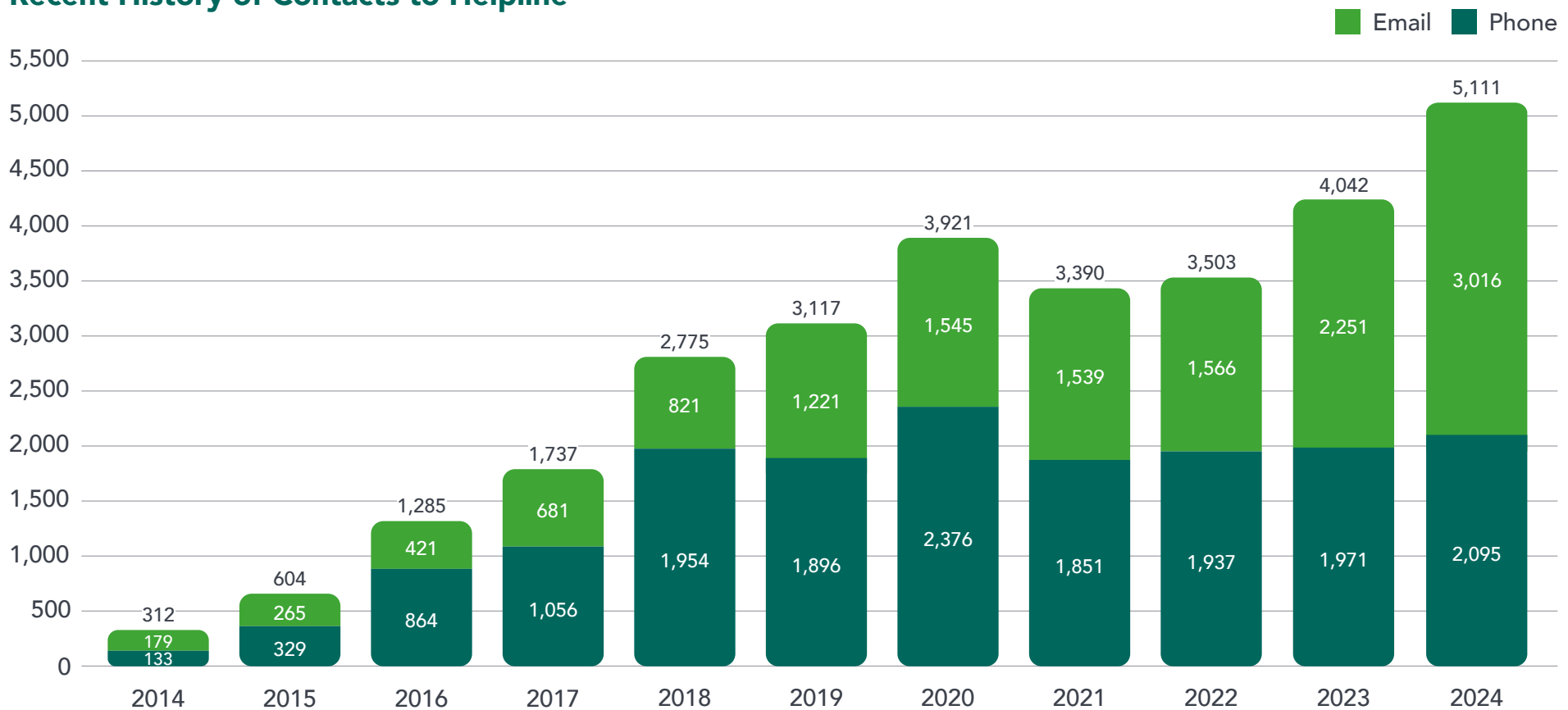


It allowed me to concentrate on getting fully better before having to worry about going to work. It meant I didn't have to return to work when I wasn't fit. It took away the financial stress and burden I was under whilst also very unwell.

helpline contacts handled



Recent History of Contacts to Helpline



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

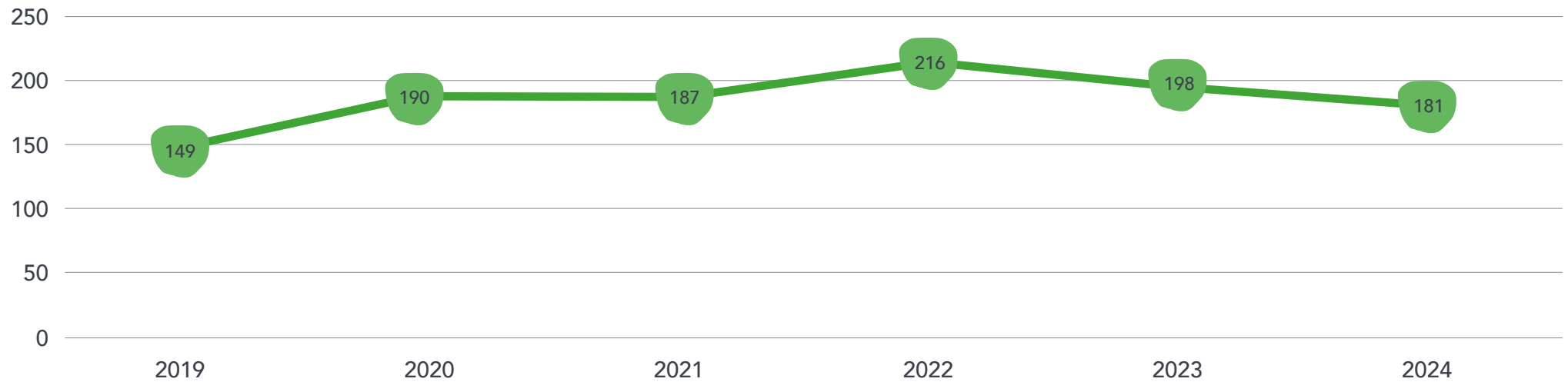
health support

referrals for mental health support



health
support

Recent History of Referrals for Mental Health Support

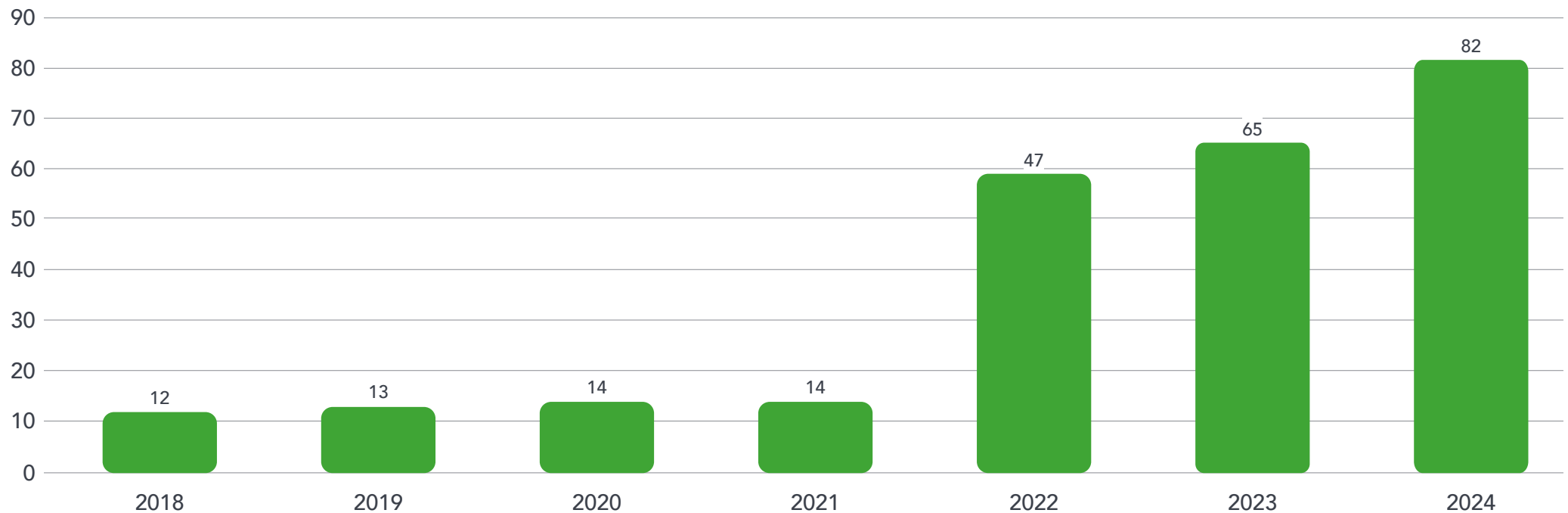


financial support applications



Vetlife has recorded unprecedented numbers of applications for financial support in 2024 by those in the veterinary community facing significant monetary difficulties. Total supportive grant payments exceeded £80,000.

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.

breaking barriers, bridging understanding

Vetlife was thrilled to announce a groundbreaking Neurodiversity Awareness Campaign during 2024, made possible by Zoetis Foundation grant funding. This initiative is a testament to our commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive veterinary community.

We were also delighted to receive 'Campaign of The Year Award' from the Association of Charitable Organisations.



Our Campaign Highlights



Blogs Featuring Lived Experiences

Our campaign kicks off with a compelling series of blogs that delve into the lived experiences of neurodivergent 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

For practical support, 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 offering guidance on navigating the process of obtaining reasonable accommodations for neurodivergent individuals. Our goal is to empower workplaces to embrace diversity and provide an environment where every veterinary professional can thrive.



Neurodiversity Talks at Veterinary Conferences

Vetlife is proud to host a series of talks on neurodiversity at key veterinary conferences throughout the year. These engaging sessions will feature experts in the field, sharing insights, best practices, and fostering open discussions about the importance of neurodiversity in the veterinary profession.

Our Sponsor – the Zoetis Foundation

We extend our sincere gratitude to the Zoetis Foundation for their grant funding enabling us to drive positive change and promote inclusivity within the veterinary community.

zoetis foundation

breaking barriers, bridging understanding cont.



This is brilliantly informative and well presented, and very much needed. Well done guys.



It was such an informative and inspiring talk!



Great article, so clear and concise but also accurate. I hope people that don't have a neurodiversity read this and it helps them understand us better.



Another great blog from the Vetlife and Zoetis initiative!



A great insight into proactive thinking around neurodiversity and people who are neurodivergent.



zoetis foundation

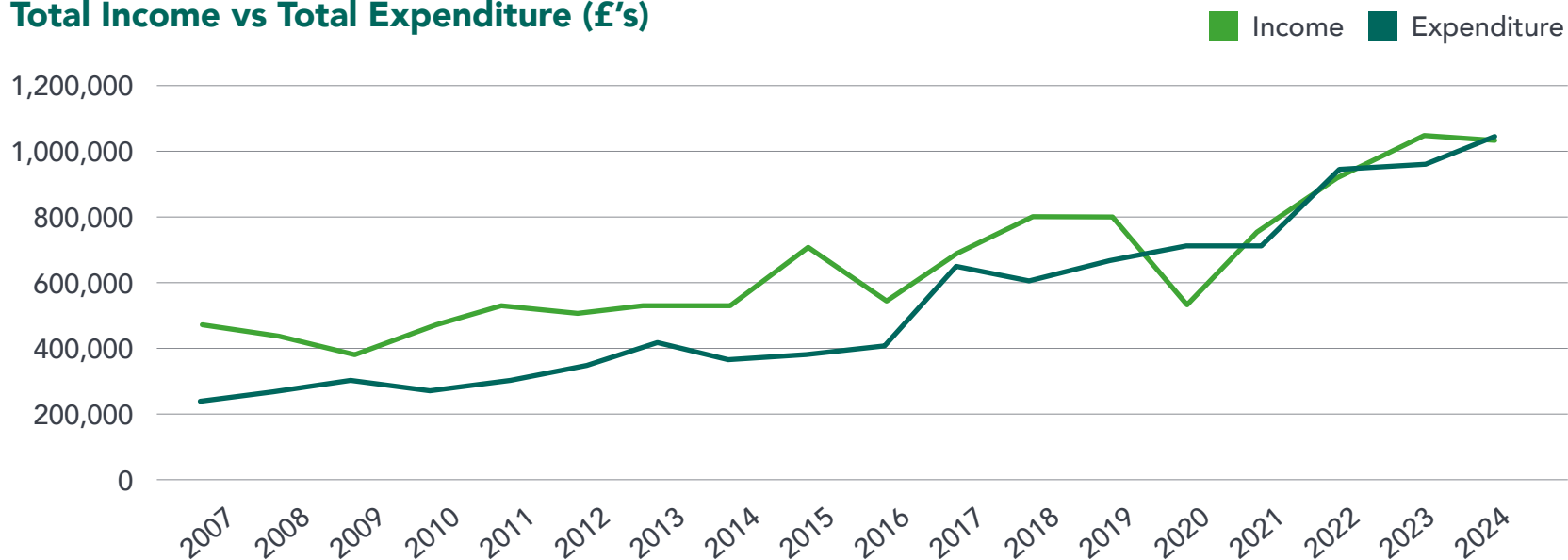
finances

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.

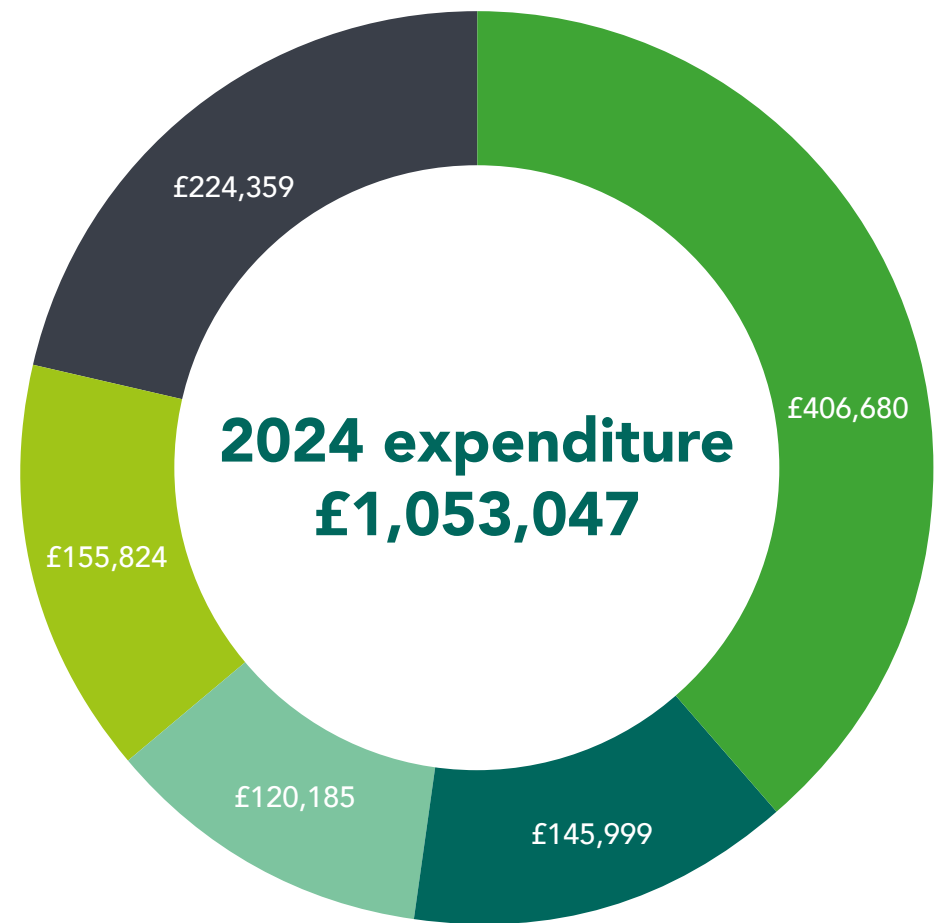
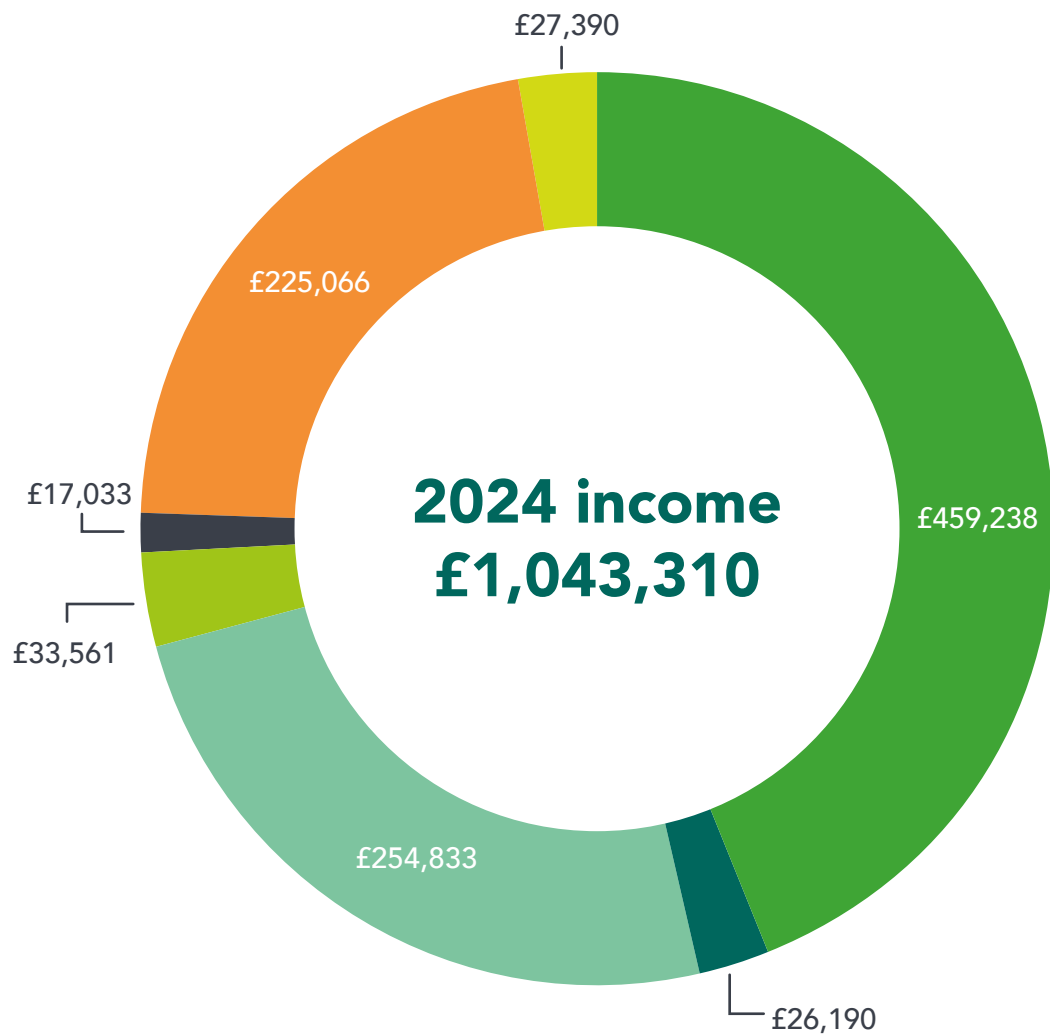
Despite what was predicted and budgeted to be a small cash deficit for the year, with the outstanding work of the charity, and the generosity of supporters, we ended 2024 just under break even.

The charity moves into 2025 in a strong financial position, able to continue to provide much needed support to the veterinary community. However, as that need continues to grow, we remain focused on maintaining, and increasing income levels to ensure sustainability for the future.

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 | ■ Subscriptions |
| ■ Bungalows | ■ Health Support donations |
| ■ Investment income | ■ Helpline Donations |
| ■ Legacies | |

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

Draft unaudited figures

fundraising overview

Vetlife were delighted to see donations through fundraising activity in 2024 amount to **£459,238**.

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

Other notable fundraisers in 2024 include:

- **Vet 4x4** Four farm vets - Mark Pearson, Sam Fenemore, Keith McKeeman, and Iain McCormick scaled the 4 highest peaks of the UK in support of Vetlife raising £7,500.
- **James Breen** and the Bristol vets held an auction at their reunion and raised over £8k for Vetlife.
- **LEJOG** awareness team who completed a 26-day cycling journey from Land's End to John O'Groats raising over £15,000 for Vetlife and the The Canmore Trust.

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 2024 **£459,238**
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 close of 2024:

 had **12,321** followers;

 had **7,851** followers;

 had **2,883** followers;

 had **4,656** followers.

The total reach for Vetlife content in 2024 on Facebook was **258,113**, X was **51,517**, Instagram was **29,982** and LinkedIn was **141,550**.

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 2024 to the following supporters:

Closer Still Media

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

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

