### vetPartners

### We are family



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## A note from Jo Malone (& Tilly)

I AM often asked what makes me most proud of VetPartners. My response is always the same, it's the awesome people in our business who show such incredible dedication and commitment to caring for the animals they treat and their owners.

I founded VetPartners in 2015 and I am as passionate about the business now as I was then.

I had previously experienced first-hand how cultural misalignment can impact a business and all the people who work within it. That shaped my approach to building VetPartners and, I must admit, has made me obsessive about how we do things.

When VetPartners was founded, I was determined to build a strong workplace culture, which would enable people to thrive.

Being in the fortunate position of being the founder, I was able to define what values were important to us and embed a culture I believed in, driven by my experience of more than 20 years in the veterinary profession.

#### Being part of something special

Working in a veterinary practice is really special. The people who go into veterinary medicine go into it for one reason – for the love and care of the animals they treat. Whether you're a vet, nurse or receptionist, you want to provide care to help animals and their owners.

Practices are full of kind-hearted, genuine people. I only have to think of the colleagues I've seen in tears because of how much they cared, perhaps a little too much. For every successful outcome, every day you still deal with the pain of clients coming to terms with the loss of their pet or telling them bad news.

Over the last seven years, I have realised that it is my understanding of what makes a business, and the people in it, tick that has been the key ingredient to making VetPartners the business it is today.

From the outset, I understood that our greatest strength was the awesome people within our practices. The best way of achieving high quality clinical care and outstanding client service is through allowing them the freedom to manage their own practice. Our role at VetPartners is to enable them to thrive by providing greater resources, support and tailored services that come as being part of a larger group.

Getting the culture right, and then maintaining it, has been vital to our growth, especially after our expansion across mainland Europe. Another important aspect of our growth has been understanding the people in our business, involving them and valuing them.

Setting a framework in which they have autonomy and can work as they wish helps keep them motivated.

### Creating a great place to work

I get a real buzz from people telling me they are enjoying their work and from seeing our practice teams happy and enthusiastic.



It is so satisfying when I visit a practice a few months after they've joined us and they tell me they are happy. The biggest thrill is hearing from practices that they have seen positive change, feel valued and are optimistic about the future of the profession.

Developing talent and providing fresh opportunities enables people to see their careers flourish in a way that may not have been previously possible. As one of Europe's largest employers of vets, we feel a duty to ensure we can offer our team members the opportunities they want to have thriving, fulfilling careers. We support their ambitions by funding certificates, investing heavily in CPD and helping them to achieve their career goals.

Our Graduate Programme is thriving and we are proud of how we're giving new vets the skills and confidence to excel in the profession, as well as help them with the challenges they face in their first years as a vet.

#### Investing in the future

We have invested £60million in our practices, including £22million over the last 12 months, and this will continue.

Our extensive programme of investment has seen the opening of state-of-the-art veterinary hospitals across the UK, and we ensure our clinical teams can utilise the latest digital technology to enhance the service they provide.

In coming years, we will continue to innovate and invest to keep up with the ever evolving expectations of clients. With maturing markets, new technologies and new trends, VetPartners is committed to a new approach and our digital transformation plans are designed to create a richer experience for clients and enable our practice colleagues to devote more of their time to the health, welfare and care of their patients.

There are exciting challenges and opportunities for growth ahead. The people in our business are the inspiration to continue to thrive.













Wearefamily

### A business built on sound values



### **Approachable**

### We create a culture of warmth & belonging

We have a personal approach, an open & inclusive environment for you to thrive in.

### Respectful

### We respect one another

Everyone makes the tea here. We listen - everyone's opinion counts. We act with humility, empathy & integrity.

### **Collaborative**

### We work together

We're called VetPartners because we believe in true partnership working, with support & collaboration to deliver our mission. You are part of our family.

### **Supportive**

### Learning is part of our DNA

We develop individuals, practices & teams.

### **Dedicated**

### We're solution focused and accountable

We look for better ways to do things, our actions matter. We're resilient, adaptable & self-aware.

### Creating a place where our people can thrive

VETPARTNERS was founded in 2015 by York vet Jo Malone with the aim of establishing a new group that would reflect values she holds dearly like being respectful, working in collaboration, supporting each other and being dedicated and approachable.

Jo was then still a working vet at her home practice of The Minster Veterinary Practice, and she sought out other practice owners who shared her vision of a bright future for the veterinary profession.

She has fostered a culture of warmth and belonging at VetPartners and has a passion for caring for pets and their owners, while developing the people who work in the organisation.

Our motto, We Are Family, sums up the close working relationships at VetPartners and how we regard our practice teams.

After building up a strong base of small animal practices across the north of England and Scotland, VetPartners quickly expanded by word of mouth as our reputation grew.

Equine, mixed and farm practices, along with practices in the south of England and Wales, soon joined us, and VetPartners also began to diversify to include other businesses, including a small animal veterinary nursing school, an equine nursing school, laboratories, a locum agency and pet crematoriums.

Our appeal has stretched into Europe, initially with five practices in Italy joining the VetPartners family. Further expansion came with the addition of practices in France, Germany, Switzerland, Portugal, Spain and Ireland.

As we grow, the key aim has been to ensure we retain that special feeling within the business, and continue to be a place where our people can thrive.

These are exciting times to be part of our family of businesses.



Wearefamily

### We are family

**Clinically led -** VetPartners is led by vets and we believe the best practices are led by vets, too. That principle goes right to the heart of VetPartners.

**Independent spirit -** No two practices are the same. We embrace and encourage that independent spirit, while at the same time supporting practices.

Wellbeing of our people - Stress is a big factor in the daily lives of many people. We want to foster a culture of self-sustaining wellbeing of all our teams, that is inclusive, diverse and the envy of other veterinary organisations.

**Investment in practices -** We invest heavily in our practices, with new sites, refurbishments and facilities, as well as providing our teams with the latest technology and equipment.

**Providing outstanding care -** Our practice colleagues put their patients first. We support them to provide outstanding care for patients and an excellent service for clients.

**Fulfilling careers -** The success of our practices is down to the people who work there. We're committed to creating a working environment where our colleagues can flourish.

**Sustainable future -** Developing our business in an efficient, ethical, sustainable and profitable way is important to us. As a diverse, highly skilled and growing group, we've a vital role to play in the transition to a sustainable economy.



### 8,500 employees 1.6million items £60m investment

across Europe - and counting!

17,500 cups of tea drank every day in our practices

### of PPE recycled



over the last 12 months



in our practices, including £22m in the last 12 months

450 vets coming through our graduate programme that's 110 new vets every year



### 17 MRI and CT scanners across VetPartners practices









**VetPartners is now in 9 European countries and** the Channel Islands





£120,000 a year



6 group wide QI projects and multiple practice level QI projects

£100,000 available to support research projects by our colleagues



A great place to work

### How we help colleagues to thrive in their career

WE believe in investing in our people and helping them to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies to succeed in their current and future roles.

We recognise the value and importance of supporting personal, clinical and professional development, and our working environment encourages people to develop to their full potential.

#### There are many ways in which we do this:

- We offer a generous CPD allowance across our family of practices an important and valuable resource to benefit all of our team members. This personal allowance enables them to acquire new knowledge and skills related to their role and personal career development.
- We have a career development framework for all career stages, from new graduates to retirement age, to help all employees to have fulfilling careers.
- VetPartners also has a bespoke online learning platform called VetPartners Learning, which is accessible to all employees, clinical or otherwise. There our team members can find clinical content specific to each species, resources for managers to support their teams, a bank of content to support mental health and wellbeing, as well as personal development topics, such as leadership development and time management.
- We provide a wide range of CPD, often in conjunction with our Clinical Board, with a calendar of events for vets working in small animal, large animal and equine.
- We also have a strong focus on supporting veterinary nurses to develop their careers and take up opportunities to do further qualifications. All nurses at our practices in France can participate in lunchtime learning courses on marketing and customer care.
- Managers of our French practices are enjoying an opportunity to boost their management skills in a series of new workshops.
- Our veterinary nurses have more opportunities than ever to develop thriving careers at VetPartners, with access to two new training programmes, Nurse Thrive and Nurse Evolve.
- Nurse Thrive provides an opportunity for senior nurses to collaborate and discuss approaches to nursing topics, share best practice and then engage with their own nursing team. Nurse Evolve focuses on sharing clinical experiences to develop and evolve clinical nursing skills.
- We are also committed to ensuring our receptionists are supported with their career development. In collaboration with the British Veterinary Receptionist Association, we offer all our receptionists the chance to join the association and study for its bronze, silver and gold-level qualifications. This online training in greeting clients, customer care, clinical care and dealing with emergencies boosts their skills in all aspects of the role.

Our internal transfer scheme enables colleagues to find their next career opportunity without having to leave VetPartners.

By contacting our recruitment team, their next career move can be arranged across almost every location in the UK or Europe. This means if colleagues are moving to another part of the country for personal reasons, or if they want to move across species, we can help them find a new role that suits them in a new location.



## We're helping young vets have the best possible start to their career

LEAVING university and starting your first job as a vet can be a daunting experience, especially if you've moved to a new area.

Every new graduate has to deal with what can sometimes feel like an overwhelming transition from university life to the challenges of practice life.

At VetPartners, we want to make this experience as comfortable as possible and help young vets to have the best possible start to their career.

Our graduate programme provides a great introduction to the profession.

From small beginnings in 2016 when it was launched with an initial cohort of 21 vets from our small animal practices, 450 newly qualified vets have now come through the programme across all species.

We have separate programmes for vets working in small animal, farm, equine, pig practice, poultry medicine and mixed practice.

So far, 50 equine vets, 75 farm and intensive livestock vets and 325 small animal vets have benefited from the graduate programme

With a caring, supporting approach, all of our programmes have a common structure of CPD, mentoring and learning opportunities across all species.

We have mentors in our practices who are on hand for support, advice and guidance. All our practices which employ newly qualified vets are approved VetGDP practices, and have one or more trained RCVS VetGDP advisers.

We have a calendar of monthly CPD events and supporting material is available through VetPartners Learning, our online learning platform. Each of our species clinical boards has a new graduate member, providing additional learning and participation opportunities.

Our clinical CPD is focused on the practical application of knowledge, problem solving and evidence-based practice and is delivered by a mix of key opinion leaders and experienced clinicians from VetPartners practices.

We also support young vets to gain non-clinical skills, with CPD including topics such as personal and situational leadership and communication.

We aim to equip our young vets with all the skills they need to develop happy, thriving careers, as well as looking after their mental health and wellbeing so they love what they do and enjoy a successful work-life balance.







## After 18 months, being a vet is still my dream job

BEING part of the VetPartners New Graduate Programme helped Georgia Miller get her career off to a successful start. Here, she explains why the programme is the perfect bridging gap between university and practice life.

Being a vet is everything I hoped it would be - it's challenging, exciting and it stretches me and I get to build relationships with some lovely clients and their pets.

Being part of the VetPartners New Graduate Programme provided me with a great opportunity to progress my career and really settle into my role.

My first job after graduating from Nottingham University in 2020 is at Station House Vets in Altrincham, part of Willows Veterinary Group. At Willows, the graduates benefit from a rotation programme, which sees us spend two months at our various branches and two main hospitals, gaining great experience and finding out what kind of practice you're best suited to.

I opted to join a small branch, where you really get to know the clients and their pets, as well as the close-knit team you're part of, but I'm also doing weekends at one of our veterinary hospitals. Beech House in Warrington.

I work one in 12 Sundays and I'm on call every two weeks and it's great to also have the experience of working at a busy veterinary hospital. You're dealing with more inpatients and making a plan for their care while they're in hospital. You're also working up cases, dealing with emergencies and helping clients who don't have insurance for their pets.

This all adds up to a great learning experience in my first job.

I'm extremely happy in my current role but, as I progress and gain more experience, I may want to work in a bigger hospital and being part of a larger veterinary group like VetPartners opens up all sorts of opportunities, all over the UK. Everyone is so supportive and caring, and there's a culture of openness where we can discuss anything.

Being part of VetPartners, I have access to great learning material that is helping me to develop into a competent and confident vet. Not only can you access great CPD resources, you get to meet other graduates and share experiences and support each other.

Being part of a larger veterinary group also gives us the opportunity to ask for help if we need it. We have access to orthopaedic surgeons, cardiologists and members of the Clinical Board.

I also had a mentor from another VetPartners practice, who I could chat to in one-to-one meetings and discuss CPD.

The Graduate Programme turned what could be a daunting experience into something really enjoyable as it provided me with a stepping stone between university and practice life.









## Thanks to VetPartners, I'm thriving in a leadership role

SINCE joining Eastgate Vets in Bury St Edmunds, Jo Cobbett has seen her career go from strength to strength, and has been supported to take on a leadership role.

Promoted to a clinical director, she has also completed her BSAVA postgraduate Certificate in Small Animal Ophthalmology with the support of VetPartners.

Achieving my BSAVA postgraduate Certificate in Small Animal Ophthalmology was the culmination of four years of hard work and an incredibly satisfying milestone in my veterinary career.

For me, studying for the certificate wasn't just about learning; it was about using the knowledge I've gained and putting it into practice every day so we can provide the best possible care for our patients.

It broadened my role and enabled Eastgate Vets to expand what we can provide, as we now offer an ophthalmology service.

I am now able to take on more advanced eye cases, and as a practice we can offer a range of ocular surgery, as well as medical treatment of ocular disease. We wouldn't have been able to do that without the support of VetPartners.

VetPartners funded my certificate, which was a real advantage for me as I wouldn't have been able to afford it myself. I wanted to develop my skills in the area of ophthalmology and expand what we are able to offer clients with more specialist treatments and surgery. As well as the financial support, VetPartners also ensured I was supported with time to attend lectures and meet the demands of the course.

This felt reassuring and was really important to me. A lack of support in pursuing my love of ophthalmology was one of the reasons I left my previous practice to join Eastgate, which became a part of the VetPartners family shortly after my arrival. The way VetPartners supports people to develop thriving careers is one of the main reasons I really like being part of the group.

In order to enable me to achieve my certificate they invested in equipment for the practice, including surgical loupes for microsurgery and a slit lamp, which is vital for examining eyes properly, and there will be further investment in other equipment too.

After joining Eastgate Vets in 2017, I was promoted to clinical director in 2019.

I completed VetPartners' senior leadership programme, which helps to equip you with the skills that benefit you in your role. One of the biggest benefits of being part of a larger group is meeting other people in the same role and being able to have a support network. You have opportunities for discussion and sharing knowledge and ideas, which is so beneficial to us all.

### Why I'm so proud to be a VetPartners Vet of the Year

### FARNHAM Veterinary Hospital clinical director Kevin Clayton reveals how VetPartners brought his dream to life.

Being part of VetPartners is rewarding and exciting, and being crowned VetPartners Vet of the Year capped an incredible time for me.

Just eight months earlier, I cut the ribbon at the opening of the new Farnham Veterinary Hospital, achieving my vision to bring pet owners in Surrey a state-of-the-art practice. This had been my dream since joining VetPartners and their team gave me support to help me achieve it. I couldn't be prouder to be clinical director of our amazing new hospital and its awesome team.

Thanks to VetPartners' investment, we have impressive facilities and the latest high-tech equipment; we've created jobs and brought new life to an empty building in the close-knit community we're proud to serve.

Being part of VetPartners is rewarding and exciting. They couldn't be more supportive of clinical teams, empowering us to provide outstanding care for patients and a great service for our clients.

We have access to high quality CPD and training but, for me, the most important thing is VetPartners' culture of warmth and belonging. They really care for their people and place our wellbeing above everything else.

That's why I was so proud to be VetPartners Vet of the Year.





## Colleague wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do

WE place our people at the forefront of everything we do so their wellbeing is our priority.

High standards of wellbeing in a workplace contribute to the overall happiness of our team members, so whether it's organising fresh fruit deliveries on a Friday, encouraging colleagues to have conversations about their mental health or providing support when they're facing life's challenges, we aim to make our employees feel valued and cared for.

In Italy, practice colleagues enjoyed a laughter yoga session and joined together to plant trees in a forest.

We encourage open conversations about mental health and try to ensure everyone enjoys a happy work/life balance, as well as a pleasant working environment.

### Support is on hand

All of our employees can access counselling, support and range of benefits through our Health Shield benefit.

We also have a Wellbeing Group, made up of vets, nurses and receptionists from across our family of practices, that provides information and resources, and organises wellbeing campaigns to raise awareness among our colleagues of the importance of looking after their physical and mental health.

Everyone has access to a wide range of resources for wellbeing in our online learning library, in a variety of formats including video, reading materials, interactive presentations, and quizzes.

We encourage our colleagues to seek help if they're going through a tough time. One of the ways we do this is through our Toilet Door Poster, which includes contact details for helplines and charities where they can access support.

We also encourage colleagues to think HALT – a simple tool to highlight key elements that affect wellbeing and performance. HALT is an acronym that actively encourages people to take a break if they are feeling Hungry, Anxious/Angry, Lonely or Tired.

Our practices also have wellbeing champions to help ensure colleagues feel supported and cared for.

### A comfortable working environment

Our teams take huge pride in their practice and we understand how much it matters to them that they have a pleasant working environment.

We invest in creating modern, vibrant practices with great facilities, plenty of space to carry out procedures and see patients, and access to the latest high-tech equipment. They tell us this provides them with great job satisfaction as well as boosting their wellbeing.

Practice revamps include communal areas where our team members can relax, unwind and have lunch or a cuppa and a chat with their colleagues.







### Being part of VetPartners is helping me thrive

Whether it's encouraging colleagues to have fulfilling careers, or ensuring everyone feels cared for during tough times, being part of VetPartners is like a family.

Here, Prince Bishop vet Gillian Brown reveals how VetPartners supported her when she needed it most...

VETPARTNERS has supported me during some of the happiest times, and some incredibly difficult ones, too.

Even though I qualified as a vet 25 years ago, I've never lost my thirst for knowledge and a desire to continue learning, and VetPartners provided great opportunities to help me to develop my career in the direction I want to go.

But I was also supported when I needed it most because of the priority they place on the wellbeing of team members, which comes from their caring culture.

While completing my Certificate in Small Animal Medicine, which was funded by VetPartners, my father was diagnosed with lung cancer and subsequently died.

I was allowed time off at short notice to travel home to my father and support him during radiotherapy. The compassionate leave afforded to me by VetPartners is something I will be forever grateful for following his death.

Being part of VetPartners meant I felt supported and there was never any pressure to return to work when I wasn't ready. They have a culture of warmth and belonging, which makes everyone feel supported and cared for.

I've so much to look forward to and I'm keen to explore more opportunities to continue my life-long learning. I know VetPartners will always be there to support me.







### What do you do at VetPartners?

My team and I support our new practices and businesses with the transition into the VetPartners family. We approach the transition period using values of being supportive, respectful, approachable and most importantly, collaborative. We also support operational matters and VetPartners' initiatives and projects, acting as the communicator between central support and our practices and businesses. Since joining VetPartners, I have been given the opportunity to complete a CMI Level 7 course in Leadership and Management, as well as an MBA in Executive Leadership.

#### What gives you most satisfaction in your job?

For me, it is a combination of two aspects. One is helping our new practices and businesses feel welcome into the VetPartners family, and being at the end of a telephone or an email for our practice and business teams who are looking for support with a wide range of different challenges, issues and queries. We aim to quickly sort these out or at least join them up with the right team to help them. Secondly, is leading a truly amazing, high performing, dedicated team of fantastic people, who all approach their roles and tasks with the VetPartners values at the forefront of that important support role.

### What's the best thing about being part of the VetPartners family?

Our culture. I have never worked anywhere with such a caring and supportive environment, and that comes from the top-down in the company. 'Everyone makes the tea' and 'we are family' are not just sayings or straplines, they are very much a tangible approach within the company. VetPartners is a company that cares about its employees and is dedicated to helping people enhance their skills, further their careers and have great places to work from.

## As VetPartners is clinically led, we understand what's important

Christina Coughlan began her working life as an animal care assistant, cleaning kennels, walking dogs and mopping floors.

After fulfilling her childhood dream of becoming a veterinary nurse, she has put her vast experience of practice life to good use by becoming a Business Development Director at VetPartners, supporting practice teams across the South West and Wales.

WHEN I was seven, I wrote a letter to my nan telling her that my ambition was to become a veterinary nurse. My nan passed away and, 22 years after writing that letter, I came across it in a box of letters and cards she had saved.

I have no recollection of writing it and I'm not even sure what led me to that decision, although I've always loved and been around animals. But I'd clearly made up my mind at that young age what my life and career were going to be. I'm so glad I did because I loved every moment of being a nurse and have enjoyed such a rewarding and fulfilling career.

I started at the grassroots of the profession as an animal care assistant and also had a spell working on reception at a small charity vets in Taunton. Then, after completing my veterinary nursing training, I qualified as a Registered Veterinary Nurse (RVN) in 2016.

I've seen all aspects of practice life and it has stood me in great stead for my role as a Business Development Director (BDD) at VetPartners. I have a good insight and understanding of the pressures faced by our colleagues in practices as well as the many great things about practice life that we want to maintain.

VetPartners is clinically led, so understands what is important to the veterinary profession. Our team of BDDs are all former vets or veterinary nurses, and our unique insight into practice life helps to build trust because our colleagues know we have walked in their shoes. We can relate to the challenges they face and also what they want from their role.

I love being a BDD as I enjoy building relationships with practices and supporting them with the business side so they can get on with aspects of the job they love most – caring for their patients and delivering the best possible care and service. VetPartners works collaboratively with its practice teams and is so supportive of what they do.

I loved being a veterinary nurse but I was seeking more and becoming a BDD enabled me to develop my career in the way I wanted. My strength is dealing with people and building strong relationships. If you look after the people and put them at the centre of everything we do, things will fall into place.



### Patient care







## Delivering the best care possible for every animal

WE are very proud of our constantly evolving Clinical Board community and their activities.

The enthusiasm our teams have for progressing clinical care is unstoppable and by working together we can really make a difference; not only to our job satisfaction but also to our clients with the services we provide. Most importantly we can deliver the best care possible for every animal we encounter.

#### We have four main areas of focus:

- Our clinical communities are at the heart of everything we do; they drive and inform our activities.
   Diversity and representation of our practice teams, across all disciplines, encourages us to build a strong, healthy culture of collective clinical leadership that upholds the values of our company.
- Quality Improvement (QI) is a key area that everyone can get involved with to progress care for our teams, clients and the animals we treat. QI is about using data generated by our teams to audit and improve care. Our current focus for QI is:
  - improving our strategic use of antibiotics, through gathering data about how we use and make decisions about antibiotics
  - surgical safety we want to understand our complication rates following routine neutering of cats, dogs and rabbits, equine castration and cow Caesars
- Clinical research and innovation are vital to ensure we constantly improve the evidence base for decision
  making and ensure we are a great, interesting place to work. We deliver and participate in varied clinical
  research projects. Examples include Project FEET (looking at perceptions of pain in dairy cattle) and
  Project WORMS (tackling equine anthelmintic resistance).
- Clinical learning and development are integral to our work. We inform, create and deliver material through VetPartners Learning, our bespoke elearning platform. Ongoing collaboration has resulted in a huge range of resources, spanning across species and available to everyone. Alongside traditional forms of clinical CPD, we provide novel activities that enable our teams to deliver the best care possible, like our open live CPD event on Pancytopenia.

Our ongoing achievements are credit to the fabulous people working in our practices. This work not only benefits our teams, clients and patients but also the wider professions and associated industries. We are delighted to be able to 'give something back' so that animal health and welfare continues to progress.

View our latest Clinical Board report here:

https://www.myvetpartners.co.uk/\_files/ugd/ c19235 O4f1bbdc415d4b7c87648f76979ba178.pdf





#### What do you do at VetPartners?

I'm Practice Standards Manager at VetPartners. I support our family of practices with their RCVS Practice Standards Scheme assessments and we strive to deliver the best standards of care. I enjoy working closely alongside other teams in the compliance sector, and how we support our practice teams and continually look at ways to improve how we support our practices and resources available. I am also a very proud RVN and, now I have a role in our central team, I love being a voice for our nurses, which is firmly encouraged through my role on our Clinical Board.

#### What do you enjoy most about your role?

I love meeting the teams when I travel to practices and being able to work with them to achieve the same goals. Our practice colleagues do such an awesome job and knowing I can help to make a difference by supporting them is important to me. I love helping to develop new ideas and achieve, support and encourage change where it may be needed.

#### What makes working at VetPartners so special?

I love working for VetPartners as I can truly say everyone is listened to. We are encouraged to offer suggestions and ideas, opinions are sought after and listened to. They really value and support everyone to develop their skills and place a high priority on wellbeing.

Our culture is one of belonging, you'll always get a friendly warm welcome and be made to feel part of the family. Not only are VetPartners committed to our teams they are committed to the profession.

### We're committed to excellence in clinical care

OUR £100,000 fund for team members undertaking research projects underpins our commitment to clinical excellence.

Our aim is to improve the evidence base for clinical decision-making by increasing the amount of research across our family of practices.

The fund is open to VetPartners employees working in clinical settings in either the UK or Europe, wishing to carry out research within their job to answer key clinical questions, and is available to anyone working in any species, whether small animal, equine or farm.

Colleagues pitch their idea to members of VetPartners' Clinical Board and funding is approved by members of the Senior Management Team, including our Director of Clinical Research and Excellence in Practice Rachel Dean.

The fund benefits our team members and our businesses, whilst also improving patient outcomes, care of animals and experience for our clients.

"We are dedicated to promoting evidence-based veterinary practice and so it is critical we fund practice-based research that answers the important questions our teams face every day," said Dr Dean.

"Through these awards we will also grow the clinical research community within VetPartners, increase the skills and knowledge of our team and increase job satisfaction for our colleagues."

All projects are registered with the VetPartners Clinical Board and gain ethical approval from either a recognised academic ethics panel or the RCVS ethics review panel, or overseas equivalent.

We also encourage and support those receiving grants to share their findings at external events, such as BSAVA, BEVA and BCVA, and VetPartners disseminates the findings to the wider profession to expand the clinical evidence base.

We even help to upskill grant holders in all aspects of designing, carrying out, interpreting and writing up their projects, supporting them to bring their project to life.









## How we're putting evidence-based medicine into practice

VetPartners puts Evidence-Based Veterinary Medicine (EBVM) at the centre of what we do to help us deliver the best possible care for our patients.

Caroline Scobie, a clinical director at Westway Veterinary Group and chair of the VetPartners Small Animal Clinical Board, is studying for a Masters in Evidence-Based Health Care.

Here, she shares her thoughts on how we are truly making a difference to the veterinary profession.

EVERY day in general practice, vets are bombarded with large amounts of information, and so many treatment options, that it's often difficult to know the right thing for the patient in front of you.

Having access to digestible information that someone has critically appraised allows you to make better decisions for the individual patient and ensures we are minimizing the harm of treatments that might not be as effective.

I'm very proud to be part of a team that's pushing forward EBVM in our profession. It is the best way to improve patient care and provide the best possible service for owners. It also supports our vets and nurses, as reducing uncertainty makes our job easier.

Human medicine is very much evidence-based, and we are moving more and more into that sphere as vets. There is an appreciation that we should be making decisions if possible, not just on opinion or people's experiences, but on real, tangible data.

Our aim is to firstly, assimilate information from our current evidence-base. And secondly, to look forward and see how as a large family of practices, VetPartners could design and run our own trials within General Practice.

Then we need to take that information and make it accessible for people, like me, working in practice. Nobody has time to read all the primary research. We must create usable sources of information to support us to make good decisions for our patients every day.

Everybody is always doing the best they can to make the right decisions. Sometimes however, you don't have enough information, there is conflicting information, or the information isn't easily accessible.

EBVM is about ensuring the profession can use the best information available to make informed decisions about the patients we care for.

It also enables a pragmatic approach as it allows us to make decisions from a financial point of view and decide what works best within a restricted budget.

I'm incredibly grateful to Westway Vets and VetPartners for supporting me in this Masters. VetPartners has always been hugely supportive of my professional fulfilment and progression.

Growth

## We love helping our practice teams to bring their dreams to life

WHETHER it is new hospitals, expanding current facilities or a complete revamp of a site, we invest heavily to enable our practices to provide outstanding veterinary care for their patients and an excellent experience for clients.

We're also committed to improving the working environment for our colleagues, so we have invested £60million in our practices, including £22million in the last 12 months. The also includes investment of £15million on new hospitals over the past four years, including £4million in the last 12 months.

We support their vision of improving their facilities and having the latest high-tech equipment.

Over the last few years, we've opened new hospitals for Valley Veterinary Hospital, Chantry Veterinary Hospital, Woodcroft Veterinary Hospital, Farnham Veterinary Hospital and Northlands Veterinary Hospital.

Anderson Abercromby Veterinary Referrals is going from strength to strength after moving to a new state-of-theart base in West Sussex, while Beechwood Vets has also benefited from a new large, modern practice in Leeds.

From the planning stage to the beginning of building work to the cutting of the ribbon at the grand opening, our practice colleagues are involved every step of the way in what is an exciting time for us all.

The VetPartners property team works in collaboration with practice members to support them to keep pace with client expectations and advancing technology that enables them to deliver the best possible care.

We guide practice colleagues through the whole process, appoint contractors, design team and project managers, delivering the project safely and sustainably, until their dream becomes a reality.

We get a real buzz from what we can do when a practice comes up with a business plan for a new site or project to improve their facilities, and we deliver projects to a high quality, with the best and latest technology.















## Our business is growing through diversification

**VETPARTNERS** is home to some of the most respected and trusted veterinary practices across Europe.

After building up a strong base of small animal practices, the group quickly expanded to include equine, mixed and farm practices.

As the group has grown, we have diversified and now include four main business areas: our veterinary practices, diagnostic laboratories, pet crematoria and e-commerce.

We also have two veterinary nursing schools and our own locum agency.

VetPartners has leading laboratories, including Biobest, a full service veterinary laboratory; Poultry Health Services laboratories and three equine laboratories.

Our diagnostic service includes biochemistry, haematology, endocrinology, cytology, serology, PCR, microbiology, environmental screening for veterinary practices, allergy testing, dermatological testing and histopathology.

We have laboratory clients from all over the world, including Peru, the Cayman Islands and Cambodia.

Pet Cremation Services is part of our business, providing caring and professional pet cremation services. Having PCS as part of our business enables us to support practice colleagues to handle pet bereavement by providing training through Compassion Understood, which provides online bereavement training and advice.

With the veterinary sector changing rapidly and new forms of telemedicine being developed, the use of telemedicine services is expanding quickly so VetPartners is developing services to meet the needs of its practice teams.

This has led to the expansion of our business to ensure we are equipped for the growing digitalisation of the veterinary industry.

We also aim to provide the best education in veterinary nursing. We were joined in 2018 by Lynwood School of Veterinary Nursing and a year later established VetPartners Nursing School at Liphook Equine Hospital.

Students learn from tutors with vast clinical experience and expertise, who are passionate about passing on their skills, leading to a pass rate which is well above the national standard.

## We're evolving all the time so we can deliver the best possible care

AS customer needs evolve, we understand that the veterinary industry needs to innovate to keep up with their expectations.

Many pet owners are used to doing everything online, and we aim to deliver a great experience to them, whilst not diminishing the in-person care that makes our practices so special to visit.

Digitilisation has many benefits for clients, including improved communication, and improves efficiency for our teams. With maturing markets, new technologies and new trends, VetPartners is committed to a new approach and our digital transformation plans are designed to create a richer experience for clients.

Whether booking online, seeking out of hours advice, receiving reminders or buying products online, we are creating a smooth, omnichannel experience that is much more convenient for both clients and our practice teams.

The boom in pet ownership has increased demand for services, and telemedicine is another area that is changing how pets are cared for. It means your pet can get medical help without having to leave home.

While it's not a replacement for regular check-ups in practice, with veterinary telemedicine you talk to a vet by text, phone or video chat to get real-time advice on what you should do for your pet.

We're working to seamlessly connect our digital ecosystem to offer a frustration-free experience for clients, whilst saving time for our practice colleagues. This will enable them to devote more of their time to the health, welfare and care of their patients and those most in need.

VetPartners has invested significantly in the digitalisation of practices and services for clients and will continue to do so.



### **Our growing European family**

VETPARTNERS was established with three UK practices in October 2015 and soon our reputation spread across Europe.

European veterinary practices began approaching us to become part of our group because they shared our passion for caring for both people and animals.

Our exciting European journey started in November 2019 when three small animal practices, Ospedale Degli Animali in Ferrara, Vet Hospital H24 Firenze in Florence and Ospedale Veterinario Dott Peressotti in Parma, became part of our family of practices.

Expansion then continued in France - and we are still growing across the rest of Europe.



My home practice wanted to join a group made up of like-minded people, who cared about the profession and its people, and we decided VetPartners was the right home for us.

David Giraldi, Managing Director, VetPartners Italy



Being part of VetPartners' adventure in France is very exciting to me as it marked a major evolution of the veterinary landscape in the country.

I believe VetPartners can sustainably contribute to the development of a global, innovative company, with a welcoming, professional network to improve welfare and animal health.

Vincent Parez, Managing Director, VetPartners France



We can truly identify with the VetPartners culture of support. With VetPartners at our side, we can provide our employees with a safe workplace where it is a pleasure to work. Working together in a great team gives us the basis to be very committed to the care of our patients and their owners.

Sabinne Bürgener, Managing Director, VetPartners Germany



VetPartners was founded by vets for vets and I know from personal experience after selling my own practice what it means to be part of the group. I've experienced its organisational culture and the shared values of the practices that characterise VetPartners. These are qualities that will work in Ireland and will help VetPartners become the group of choice there.

Gavin McCoubrey, Managing Director, VetPartners Ireland



By focusing on its people and the veterinary profession, VetPartners is making a huge difference. We focus on attracting and growing talent, with good professionals and good people who can continue developing in the profession.

Augusto Macias, Managing Director, VetPartners Spain



VetPartners is the right fit for us because we share the same values and culture. It is a very caring group that looks after its people and supports teams while still allowing them the autonomy to make clinical decisions.

Florent Bourachot, Managing Director, VetPartners Switzerland



As a vet, I am proud to contribute to the growth of teams, the people, the quality of veterinary services provided and the wellbeing of patients who trust our clinics. To achieve these goals, we focus on our people and maintain and respect the DNA of our different clinics and hospitals, and humbly help to build a healthier and more balanced future for everyone.

Maria Margarida Tomé, Business Development Director, VetPartners Portugal



## Our culture is what unites us across European countries

Augusto Macias, VetPartners Spain Managing Director

"The culture and values of VetPartners are palpable in every action that is carried out in this great family."

#### What makes VetPartners so special?

I knew from the beginning that VetPartners was not just another veterinary group. The culture and values of VetPartners are palpable in every action that is carried out in this great family.

I started my adventure as country manager of VetPartners Spain in 2021, and I couldn't be prouder and happier of the team we have formed to continue supporting the veterinary profession in all aspects of the business.

#### How do you see the future of VetPartners?

We are building a company focused on the development of the veterinarian, with expert veterinary teams in the clinical world who understand everything that surrounds them and the profession.

Collaborative work and respect, knowing that no one is more than anyone else, are two of the key elements for us. But also the training of all team members, from receptionists to veterinary specialists and helping them to be part of the journey.

#### How is our culture shared in Spain?

With almost 50 practices in Spain, we are very happy to know that we are on the right track and that this is the best way for the teams to be really motivated and at ease in their jobs. "Everyone makes the tea here" is our maxim in Spain, too.



#### What do you do at VetPartners?

I'm Business Support Director, so I work with an amazing team who deliver support projects to our practices. This can involve looking at team dynamics, client experience, leadership development, PDR support and communication opportunities as just some examples.

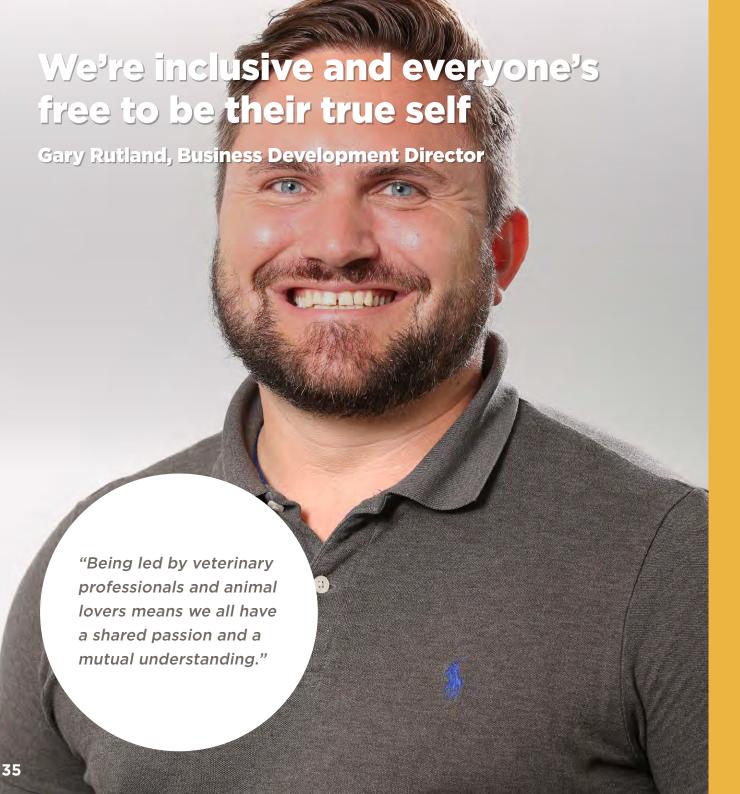
#### What are the main challenges for practices today?

I think our main challenge in practice is fully appreciating our worth as professionals. The veterinary profession is full of caring, compassionate, talented individuals drawn to the industry for the ways in which they can make a difference and improve the lives of patients and their owners. Yet there are times when we don't fully value our time and expertise to ensure it is paid for and we can feel embarrassed to charge for the entire service that we provide. Having been there myself, I now far better appreciate confidence in charging for the skills and knowledge that we provide and how that will support the future development of our teams, practice and profession.

#### What gives you most satisfaction in your job?

My satisfaction comes from supporting others and helping them see a new perspective, to feel more confident and happy in the role that they do and connecting our VetPartners colleagues together. It can feel lonely in practice sometimes, so to know that you have a huge network of likeminded colleagues can make a big difference. I see it as best utilising the huge brain that exists across our VetPartners family!

# Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance



### What do you do at VetPartners?

I am a former RVN and I am responsible for looking after our family of practices in the south east and Lynwood School of Veterinary Nursing, which trains small animal nurses. I support our practice teams to grow and flourish in their roles, leading the team and developing their practices so we can all achieve our aim of providing a great service for clients and being a great place to work.

#### What do you enjoy most about your role?

I have always been passionate about providing the best care for patients and clients. My role is now non-clinical but looking after the people on the front line is so important. VetPartners encourages and supports all colleagues with training and development, whether they are in a clinical or a leadership role.

#### Why is having the right culture so important?

Having a supportive, respectful and collaborative culture means we can be our authentic selves and do the job we love without fear or hiding parts of who we are. Having the right culture enables us to put our hands up when on occasions we are less than awesome, and also celebrate all the awesome things we achieve individually and together.

#### What sets VetPartners apart from other companies?

Having worked in the veterinary profession for over 26 years in various roles for various companies, what sets VetPartners apart is that we live the culture and values every day. Being part of a company that cares and makes wellbeing a high priority makes me proud. Being led by veterinary professionals and animal lovers means we all have a shared passion and a mutual understanding.

## Caring colleagues pull together to make a difference in their communities

WHETHER it's baking cupcakes to sell, running 5K or organising a sponsored dog walk, we've raised thousands of pounds for charities and worthy causes close to our heart.

The generous spirit of colleagues across our family of practices has benefited our chosen charities as we've raised nearly £20,000 a year for Pets As Therapy and The Cinnamon Trust. Our colleagues joined together across the group to pull out all the stops for great causes.

In November 2020, team members ran, jogged, cycled or walked 3,139 miles - the distance from Portsmouth, USA, to our headquarters in York - recording individual mileage on the Strava app until we had raised £5,020 for Pets As Therapy.

Among the amazing efforts, Judy Scrine, clinical director at Mayes & Scrine equine vets in Horsham, Sussex, completed six marathons and ran 311 miles, while Andy MacGregor, clinical director at Ashlands Vets in West Yorkshire, and his wife Anne who is practice manager, cycled and walked 1,175.16 miles, climbing 60,000ft.

The crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine saw VetPartners quickly respond to help people and pets caught up in heartbreaking situations. When we saw the plight of the people and animals from the charity Nowzad, as people desperately tried to leave Afghanistan for the safety of the UK, we desperately wanted to help them.

As well as offering employment to vets from the charity, we set up an appeal that raised £20,000 in the space of just three days to help their safe passage from Afghanistan. We were also incredibly moved by the terrible scenes in Ukraine, with people fleeing their homes with their pets after their homes were bombed by Russian forces.

Our practices organised fundraising events, including cake sales, raffles, tombolas and claw clips in exchange for a donation. VetPartners matched the amount raised, taking it to a grand total of £20,521, which was shared between the British Red Cross Ukraine Crisis Appeal and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW).

Our colleagues in Germany raised 2,072€ through a charity bike ride on their stand at Deutsche Vet, with more than 200 cyclists reaching a total distance of 404km. VetPartners donated 5€ per kilometer and the money was donated to support people in Ukraine.

Our colleagues at VetPartners Italy welcomed a Ukrainian family seeking refuge after fleeing the war-torn country when their home was bombed.

Managing Director David Giraldi secured accommodation for a family of nine, including five children, and helped to fund their stay near his home in Ferrara, as well as arranging employment and schooling.

We're proud to have a central fund of up to £120,000 a year, or £10,000 a month, to match fund any charity initiatives by our colleagues. These fundraising efforts create a real spirit of togetherness and belonging across our group.

Christmas Jumper Day in aid of Save the Children and the Macmillan Coffee Morning are just two of the events where we all join together to raise money for other charities.

We encourage and support our practices when they arrange fundraising events in their community. Another way we give back to great causes is through volunteering. At the request of team members, we enable them to have paid time off to volunteer in the communities they serve. We know how much it means to them to be able to give something back.







### I feel supported as a vet and as a mum

As well as enjoying a fulfilling career as clinical director at Minster Equine Veterinary Clinic in York, Gemma Dransfield is a proud mum of two girls.

It can be tricky juggling work and home life but, here, Gemma explains why it has been made possible thanks to the support of VetPartners...

EVERY parent knows how hard it can be to balance the demands of work with those of their family, but VetPartners understands the challenges parents face and offers flexible working arrangements to make life easier.

VetPartners has also supported my career development and helped me to become the best vet I can be. Before I went on maternity leave for the second time, I was promoted to clinical director.

I love my role as I am given a high degree of autonomy by VetPartners, while simultaneously having their support in certain areas such as HR and marketing. Along with my co-clinical director, I manage a small team of 13 people.

While on maternity leave, I never felt I was being forgotten about and we organised days for me to keep in touch with work.

Thanks to VetPartners' willingness to offer flexible working, I returned in a part-time role and have other clinical directors to support me. They were flexible which days and hours I worked after maternity leave and have since allowed my work patterns to change to manage my caseload. To enable me to work as a stud vet, I work full-time during spring and summer, but then part-time for the rest of the year. I was also supported to run for BEVA Council and I am allowed time off for meetings.

I would not have been able to do this without the support of my team at Minster Equine, as well as VetPartners.

I am proud to be part of veterinary group that supported me as a new mum, as many women see their careers suffer when they have children. My career is thriving and I feel I am progressing in my role with all the support VetPartners provide.

### Proud to be a family friendly employer

Work/life balance is more important than ever. We all have lives and responsibilities outside of our jobs. VetPartners is extremely mindful of this and we're open to working with our employees to ensure that their job doesn't place undue strain on other parts of their life and compromise family commitments or wellbeing.

We are a family friendly employer and offer flexible working, including part-time hours. We support parents taking maternity, adoption, surrogacy and paternity leave.

From June 1st 2022, we introduced enhanced maternity pay with eight weeks paid at 100% of your average weekly earnings, then 12 weeks paid at 50% of your average weekly earnings.

We understand it is an expensive time for parents juggling work and childcare so we offer a one-off payment of 5% of our employees' expected annual salary for the 12 months after the primary care giver returns to work.

## Taking our responsibility to the planet seriously

WHETHER it's recycling PPE, cutting back on single-use plastic, creating wildlife gardens or reducing energy consumption, VetPartners is playing a vital role in making our business more sustainable and eco-friendly.

As we've grown as a business, our responsibility to the environment has grown, too.

Entitled Looking Forward Together, our sustainability strategy is helping us to reduce our carbon footprint, cut waste and supercharge our charitable activities.

Looking Forward Together commits us to a range of short and long-term goals that put sustainability at the heart of everything we do, reflecting our ethos of developing the business in an efficient, ethical, sustainable and profitable way in line with our values.

Over the next five years, we have committed to 21 targets covering many aspects of environmental and social sustainability.

VetPartners has set a target to help at least 70% of our businesses conduct a personalised waste review and find opportunities to minimise waste volumes and optimise waste management in practices. Among the other positive developments is having more than 200 of our sites on zero carbon electricity contracts.

We have a dedicated team to support practices with any aspect of sustainability, including environmental compliance, reducing waste, their carbon footprint and engaging colleagues and clients.

Our practice teams have thrown their weight behind our ambitious sustainability goals.

We have a green champions' network to enable our practices to share knowledge and ideas to help each other with sustainability and we also help our practices to achieve the prestigious Investors in the Environment accreditation.

This accreditation enhances their reputation with existing and potential clients, makes practices more attractive when recruiting and can save money on utility bills.

We were the first veterinary group to provide Zero Waste Boxes for more than 300 of our sites in England, Scotland and Wales to recycle extra PPE during the global health pandemic. In the first year, more than 1.1 million items were saved from landfill by TerraCycle boxes. These have been effective and important steps towards becoming more sustainable.

We've also had some fun along the way, too. Some practices have even built their own wildlife gardens to attract birds, bugs and beetles, as well as creating a relaxing oasis for colleagues to enjoy.

Our teams across Europe share a common goal to be kinder to the planet. Our stand at UNISVET National Congress in Milan was created from recycled cardboard and linoleum, while the chairs, footstools and coffee table where visitors could relax were all made of cardboard.

View our latest Sustainability Report here: https://www.myvetpartners.co.uk/\_files/ugd/c19235 6c619f5a4ea742778a8171730830accf.pdf









#### What do you do at VetPartners?

I'm the Head of ESG, which stands for Environment, Social and Governance. Essentially that means I help the company to grow in a sustainable way, while making sure we're doing the right thing and acting fairly for the environment and for people: whether that's our colleagues, clients, or anyone who's connected to the work we do. I also look after our charitable activities and support our businesses in their fundraising and volunteering.

### Why is sustainability so important for the veterinary profession?

It's a caring profession, so it's no surprise that people are really passionate about sustainability. It's also incredibly important because veterinary work can have a big impact on the environment, both positive and negative. There are lots of areas where we need to focus on reducing environmental impact, but also areas of huge opportunity such as farm veterinary where people are working in really innovative ways and where better animal welfare is also leading to better environmental outcomes.

### What's the level of enthusiasm from practices to become more environmentally friendly?

Very high! I've been constantly amazed by people's dedication to making their practices more sustainable, even throughout the pandemic and various other challenges. I think it's an indication of the high levels of energy and passion in the veterinary sector, plus the culture of caring and collaboration at VetPartners.

#### What gives you most satisfaction in your job?

I have to admit I'm a bit of a spreadsheet geek.
I love seeing concrete evidence for how we're making a difference through what we're doing. But what makes me most happy is when we're able to provide a bit of advice and then practices run with it and do brilliant things – often way beyond anything I imagined to start with!





# We're committed to creating a diverse business where everyone can be themselves

WE nurture workplaces where colleagues can be themselves and work without prejudice, whether relating to age, ethnicity, social backgrounds, gender, culture, disability or sexuality.

We're committed to broadening our appeal to people from different backgrounds because we believe that encouraging greater diversity has the power to transform the veterinary profession in the most positive way.

Workplace diversity builds trust and respect among employees, and ensures everyone thrives and can be themselves.

Becoming more diverse, and visibly so, is one of the ways to inspire the next generation to consider a career as a vet regardless of their background, ethnicity or religion.

We celebrate our diversity in many ways. We support our LGBTQ+ colleagues who are safe in the knowledge that they can come to work and be their authentic self.

We provided £3,000 sponsorship for the British Veterinary LGBT+ community to support meetings and attendance at London Pride.

Many youngsters are put off from pursuing a career as a vet because of the high financial cost of going to university. So, every year we invite applications for bursaries to study veterinary medicine at university, opening up opportunities for students from lower income households.

People from different backgrounds have different perspectives, views and opinions. Challenging each other, rather than going with the consensus, is a crucial way to raising standards in the profession by looking at problems from all different angles to find new ways of treating animals and new ways of working.

## Our bursaries are removing the financial burden for budding vets

WE want to create opportunities for more people to go to vet school if that is their dream and not to have to worry about the financial burden.

Many youngsters are discouraged from pursuing a career as a vet due to the high cost of studying at university.

So, every year we invite applications for bursaries to study veterinary medicine at university, opening up opportunities for students from lower income households to join our wonderful profession.

VetPartners provides 15 bursaries a year, with each student receiving £1,500-a-year for the full duration of their five years at vet school. Graduates will then be offered roles in our family of practices.

Anyone applying for a bursary must already have a university place, and bursaries are awarded to those whose household income falls below a certain amount.

Our aim is to encourage greater diversity in the profession and make a real difference to students who otherwise would struggle to meet the cost of course fees, accommodation and living expenses, as well as EMS.

As our CEO Jo Malone says: "We believe it is important for VetPartners, and all the larger veterinary groups, to ensure we make a positive contribution to the profession and leave a legacy that helps people to thrive.

"We know there are some people who simply can't afford to go to university. Having more people from more diverse backgrounds enriches the profession and ensures talented people are not missing out because of the high cost of studying."

Our five-year package of bursaries totaling more than £500,000 is supporting 75 students over the period.

Applicants need to provide a personal statement about their motives for studying veterinary medicine and how the bursary will help.





Thank you to everyone for making VetPartners a great family to be part of and a great place to work!

Jo Malone