

Where can I get help with vet bills?

Getting help in an emergency

If your pet suddenly becomes very sick or gets seriously injured and you simply do not have the money to pay for veterinary treatment on the spot, you must take your animal to the vets anyway. Veterinary surgeons are obliged, as part of their RCVS registration and the pledges that they made upon training and qualifying to become a vet, to provide emergency treatment to a minimum level that will ease pain and suffering. This may mean administering treatment to a very basic level for a short period until an alternative can be decided upon, or by euthanizing a seriously injured animal that is suffering without respite.

You should always be upfront and honest with your veterinary surgeon about your ability to pay for your pet's treatment. Veterinary surgeons are animal lovers, but they are not charities, and they are only obliged to provide basic, short-term care for a suffering pet, not to bankroll ongoing treatments. If you are honest with your vet in times of need, you may well find that they are more than willing to work out a budget and repayment scheme with you for extended treatment, or be able to point you in the direction of charities and organisations that can help to fund the needed treatments.

Charities that may help to cover the cost of veterinary care

There are several national organisations that provide support and funding or veterinary help to pet owners in genuine financial difficulties, and often various small independent local operations as well. Most charities have very firmly set criteria as to their eligibility process, who they can help and to what extent, and some of them will require you to register your pet as part of their scheme before treatment is required. Few charities will provide financial support for foreseen and preventative costs, such as vaccinations, but some will assist people on low incomes to help to pay for spaying and neutering

PDSA Vet Care

The PDSA Vet Care scheme is available to people who live within the catchment area of a PDSA animal hospital, or a veterinary practice that accepts the scheme. Most areas will have at least one practice that partakes in the scheme. In order to be eligible for assistance, you must be in receipt of either council tax benefit or housing benefit, and live within the defined area covered by a PDSA affiliated practice. You will also be expected to make a contribution towards the cost of the treatment given, and many practices will only allow you to register one pet for treatment under the scheme. Unless it is an emergency, you will also generally be expected to have your pet registered under the scheme before treatment is needed. Contact details: 0800 731 2502 between 9am and 5pm. <http://www.pdsa.org.uk/pdsa-vet-care>

The Dogs Trust

The Dogs Trust helps people on low incomes, including homeless people, to cover the cost of spaying and neutering, and in some cases, subsidises veterinary care for dogs. More information is on their website. <https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/help-advice/>

Dog Trust Glasgow

315 Hamilton Road

Uddingston, Glasgow

Contact detail: 0141 773 5130

Cats Protection

UK Cats Protection may provide financial assistance with the cost of spaying and neutering cats, but they do not operate any other financial assistance schemes for veterinary care. To learn about the Cats Protection's scheme to assist with the cost of spaying and neutering. More information is on their website.

<http://www.cats.org.uk/what-we-do/neutering/financial-assistance>

Lanarkshire branch: 0845 3714213 or email lanarkshirecats@sky.com

Glasgow branch: 0845 371 2722 or email cpglasgow@gmail.com