



Vets Now in 'real' living wage pledge

Vets Now is pledging to pay all of its staff more than the 'real' living wage.

It's understood they are the first major veterinary business in the UK to make this promise.

Salaries for around a third of the pet emergency firm's 1280 employees, who work in vital roles such as receptionists and animal care assistants, are set to increase to at least £9.50 an hour from April, with the remaining workers already earning a higher sum.

This follows a recommendation from the Living Wage Foundation, who offer independent advice to employers, and say £9.30 has become the real cost of living.

The real living wage is significantly higher than the Government-set national living wage of £8.72 for people aged 25 and over.

Vets Now's chief executive Mark Ross said: "Our people are our biggest asset and at the heart of everything we do. We want to properly recognise the vital role each and every one of them plays in the business.

"This move demonstrates our commitment to that. We are confident that by paying all of our staff a competitive hourly rate of at least 20p more than the real living wage we will achieve higher morale and lower turnover."

Animal care assistant, Jody Reynolds, who works in Vets Now out-of-hours clinic in Kirkcaldy, said the decision to pay staff the real living wage will make a real difference to her life.

She added: "It's amazing that Vets Now has been able to increase salaries to not only meet but exceed the real living wage. The extra will really help towards the cost of everyday living and even allow a few luxuries."

Her views were echoed by Julie Orrock, a call handler at Vets Now's out-of-hours contact centre in Dunfermline. She said: "It's great that Vets Now is committing to paying above the real living wage. It'll have a real impact on my life, allowing me to do more with friends and family in my spare time and to treat myself every now and again."

Once the change comes into force on April 1, Vets Now will seek membership of the Real Living Wage Foundation. Almost 6000 employers have already signed up to increase their pay to real living wage levels, including football clubs, banks and retailers.



Where applicable, Vets Now staff based in London and the south-east of England will receive regional allowances to bring their salaries up to real living wage levels for those areas.

Recent research by KPMG found that around 19% of jobs in the UK pay less than the real living wage. At 23%, Northern Ireland had the highest proportion, while south-east England had the lowest at 15%.

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Vets Now notes to editor:

- Vets Now was established in 2001 and is the leading provider of emergency veterinary care for small animals in the UK.
- With 24/7 Pet Emergency Hospitals in Glasgow, Manchester and Swindon, and 59 out-of-hours clinics nationwide, Vets Now is committed to delivering a responsive emergency and critical care service for cats, dogs and other small animals.
- Vets Now also partners with more than 1,400 veterinary practices across the UK to provide their clients with a seamless out-of-hours emergency care service.
- Vets Now employs over 1000 staff.
- Vets Now remains at the forefront of emergency veterinary care through its commitment to clinical excellence and training, employing many of the country's top Emergency & Critical Care clinicians.