



JOB DESCRIPTION

Head of Veterinary Surgery

Location: USPCA Head Office, Unit 5–6 Carnbane Industrial Estate, Newry

Reports to: Chief Executive

Key Relationships: SMT, Practice Manager/Head Veterinary Nurse, Animal Care Manager, Customer Care Manager

Remuneration Package: £50,000 - £60,000 per annum, 25 days Annual Leave and 10 days Statutory Leave Days, Pension Contribution.

Other Remuneration benefits: £1000 CPD allowance, RCVS, VDS and AVSPNI fees paid

Contract: Permanent, Full-Time 35 hours per week (expected to participate in a clinical rota)

About the USPCA

The Ulster Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (USPCA) is Northern Ireland's leading animal welfare charity. For over 180 years, we have worked to protect animals, prevent cruelty, relieve suffering, and promote kindness across our communities.

We deliver vital services from rescuing and rehabilitating animals to tackling wildlife crime and educating the public. By joining our team, you will help ensure the delivery of high-quality veterinary care and support the organisation's mission to improve animal welfare across Northern Ireland.

Role Purpose

The Head of Veterinary Surgery is a senior leadership role responsible for ensuring the effective clinical, operational and strategic direction and financial management of the USPCA Animal Hospital in Newry. This role ensures the highest standards of animal care,

leads a multidisciplinary clinical team, and supports the organisation's mission to prevent cruelty, promote welfare, and provide accessible veterinary services to the community. They will ensure excellent clinical standards of animal care, outstanding client experience, efficient and sustainable service delivery and a productive and engaged team environment.

The postholder is expected to medically and surgically assess and treat small companion animals and injured wildlife at the USPCA Animal Hospital to deliver an efficient, professional and caring service in accordance with USPCA policies.

The role will combine strong surgical expertise with compassionate leadership, operational excellence, and a commitment to animal welfare advocacy.

Key Responsibilities

Clinical Leadership & Surgical Excellence

- Leads all veterinary services within the USPCA, ensuring best-practice standards across routine, complex, and emergency procedures.
- Oversees clinical protocols, surgical safety, patient care pathways, and welfare-first decision-making.
- Provides consultation, diagnosis and medical treatment of companion animals, rescued animals including stray dogs and cats brought to the USPCA and wildlife within the USPCA animal shelter.
- Undertakes surgeries including neutering and emergency interventions.
- Carries out a range of tests including X-Rays and Ultrasound and provide care pre and post operatively for animal in-patients of the USPCA Animal Hospital.
- Plans and collaborates with other veterinary staff to deliver a 6-day service rota for veterinary services.
- Carries out regular private health checks, give vaccinations and give owners advice on care and diet for their animals.
- Treats injured wildlife and injured stray animals in accordance with USPCA Policies.
- Make clinical decisions based on the best interests of the animal to euthanise severely injured animals or terminally ill animals, where suffering cannot be alleviated by treatment or rehabilitation.
- Delivers charitable, private and preventive clinical work of appropriate quality within the scope of the service, USPCA policies and RCVS Code of Conduct.

- Promotes animal welfare and responsible pet ownership through client education and preventative medicine in accordance with USPCA Policy.
- Maintains high standards of clinical governance, including infection prevention and management.

Team Leadership and Management

- Lead, mentor, and support veterinary surgeons, nurses, and clinical support staff.
- Works collaboratively with the Senior Management Team to plan and ensure the veterinary workforce meets the needs of the charity and veterinary social enterprise.
- Undertakes team and own annual appraisal ensuring CPD learning and development is achieved.
- Foster a positive, collaborative, and welfare-focused culture within the clinic.

Operational Management

- Manage day-to-day operations of the veterinary surgery, ensuring efficient workflow and resource allocation.
- Oversee maintenance and development of clinical facilities, equipment, and medical supplies.
- Ensure compliance with regulatory frameworks, including RCVS standards, health and safety requirements, and controlled drugs legislation.
- Develop and monitor budgets, cost controls, and service performance KPIs.

Strategic Development

- Work with senior leadership to shape and deliver the long-term vision for the USPCA's clinical services.
- Identify opportunities for service expansion, improved community impact, and operational innovation.
- Support fundraising, public engagement, and external partnerships related to veterinary welfare and clinic operations.

Animal Welfare & Advocacy

- Promote the USPCA's mission through high-quality veterinary care, ethical decision-making, and compassionate service delivery.

- Contribute expert insights to welfare campaigns, education programmes, and public communication efforts.
- Support cruelty investigations and animal rescue operations with clinical expertise where required.

Governance & General Responsibilities

- Ensure compliance with veterinary regulations, health and safety, and data protection legislation.
- Maintain accurate records and ensure audit readiness.
- Uphold USPCA policies, procedures, and values.
- Promote and uphold the USPCA's mission policies, procedures, and values.
- Maintain professionalism, high standards of professional conduct confidentiality, and integrity at all times.
- Contribute flexibly to the needs of the organisation.
- Ensure the organisation is represented positively at all times.
- Take reasonable care for personal health and safety and that of colleagues, clients, volunteers and members of the public affected by the role.
- Deal with confidential and sensitive information appropriately and maintain professionalism in all internal and external interactions.
- Undertake additional duties, travel and attendance at events or meetings, including outside normal working hours, where reasonably required within the scope of the role.

Person Specification

Essential

Qualifications

- MRCVS registered and eligible to practice in the UK.

Experience

- 2 years post graduate experience in small animal practice, including complex procedures.

Knowledge & Skills

- Proven strong leadership, interpersonal and team management experience in a veterinary or clinical environment including the ability to lead, motivate, and develop teams.
- Financial awareness and experience of budget monitoring or reporting.
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to work well under pressure.
- Ability to manage multiple priorities, make sound clinical decisions, and operate effectively in a busy environment.
- Excellent organisational and time management skills.
- Ability to work autonomously while collaborating effectively with senior colleagues and wider teams.
- Evidence of continuing professional development relevant to veterinary practice and leadership.

Personal Qualities

- Professional, credible and values-led in approach.
- Committed to high standards of animal welfare, service quality and professional conduct.
- Professional approach to veterinary care and clinical practice.
- Self-motivated to work independently.

Other Essential Requirements

- Flexibility to work varied hours, including occasional evenings/weekends.
- Full UK driving licence with access to transport and willingness to travel.
- Commitment to continuous professional development and to the USPCA's mission and values.

Desirable

- Additional surgical qualifications (e.g., Cert AVP, PGCert, or equivalent)
- Experience in charity or animal welfare sector.
- Experience of shelter medicine.
- Experience of supporting service improvement or organisational change.
- Experience of clinical governance, quality improvement, and operational management.
- Public engagement or media experience