

# Careers

with the Scottish SPCA



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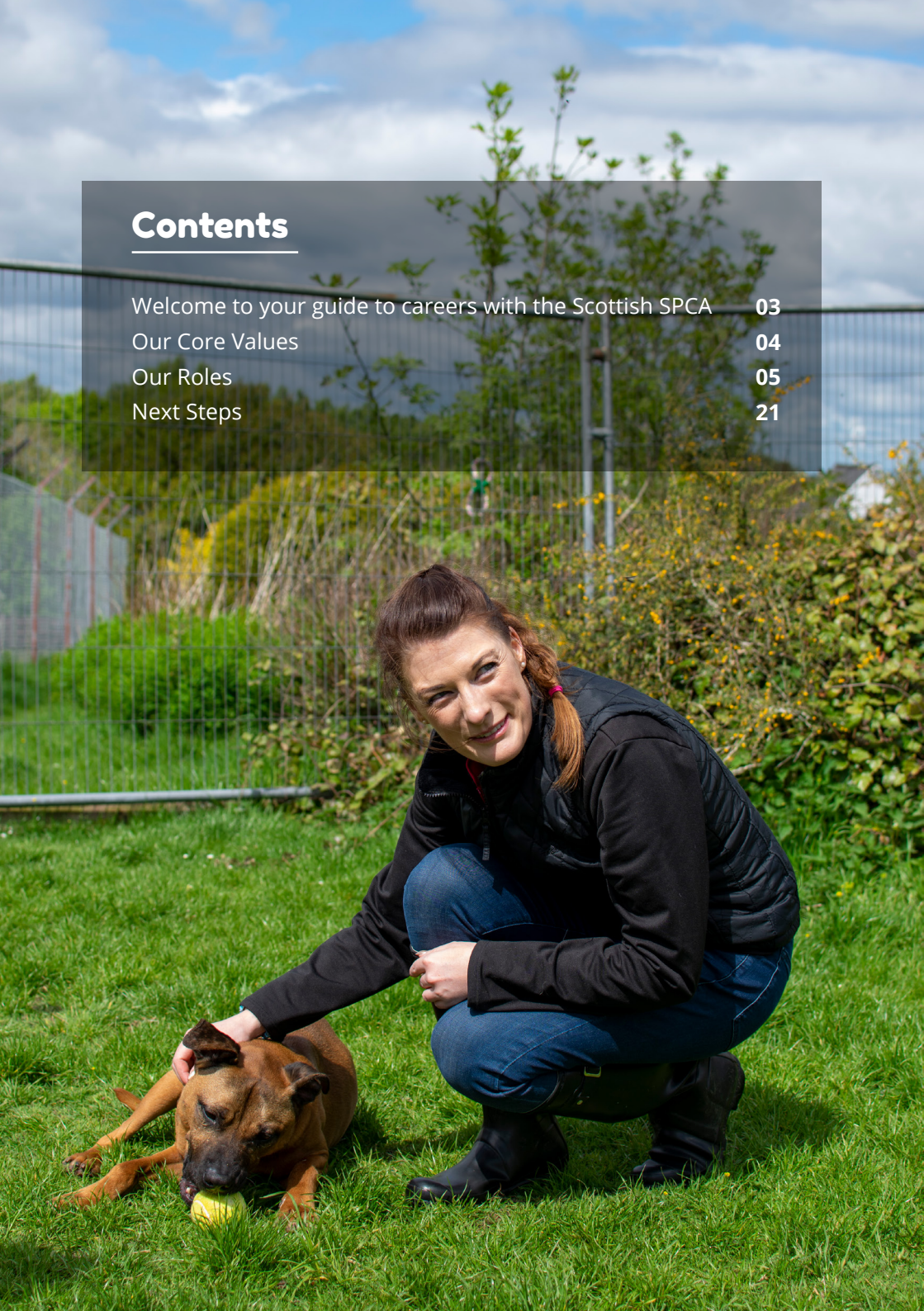
Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals | Scottish Charity No. SC 006467



**ANIMAL WISE**®  
SCOTTISH SPCA

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# Welcome to your guide to careers with the Scottish SPCA

As Scotland's animal welfare charity, we've been on-hand to protect animals and prevent cruelty for over 180 years. We've grown to become a national charity which celebrates the strength of the human-animal bond. Our purpose is to:

-  **Enrich the lives of animals and people.**
-  **Champion animal welfare and encourage respect and kindness for animals across all our communities.**
-  **Educate people of all ages about the welfare of animals in our mission to eradicate animal cruelty and create a better future for all of us.**
-  **Promote the importance of the human-animal bond, and the myriad of medical, social and psychological advantages gained from animal companionship.**
-  **Help bring those who abuse animals to justice.**
-  **Get animals back on their feet, into loving homes or to thrive in the wild.**

**Join us, and become one of Scotland's Animal Champions!**



## Our Core Values

Our values sit at the heart of what we do and how we do it. We are the experts in the field of animal welfare and our knowledge is constantly growing. We show our commitment and compassion every day towards improving the lives of animals and people across Scotland. Our professional approach and our adaptability empowers us to deal with the challenges which come our way. We will continue to collaborate with each other and with our partners to truly help every animal and every person that needs us and ensure we continue to build a better world for animals and people throughout 2021. By living our values, we are Scotland's Animal Champions.

### PROFESSIONAL

We pride ourselves on the manner in which we engage with our team, our partners and the people of Scotland. In difficult situations, we are always firm but fair.

### COLLABORATIVE

Whether it's with our colleagues or partners, we embrace the benefits of teamwork.

### ADAPTABLE

The work we do is dynamic and ever-changing. We need to be flexible and, at times, quick-thinking to find solutions.

### COMPASSIONATE

We care deeply about animal welfare and all the animals we serve. We firmly believe people should be supported in looking after their animals. We provide a caring and compassionate service on a daily basis.

### COMMITTED

To rescuing and caring for animals in need, supporting people in animal welfare matters and bringing those guilty of animal cruelty to justice. We are committed to making a difference and effecting real change for animal welfare.

### EXPERT

We apply our knowledge and expertise in every aspect of our work. We strive to share our innovation and expertise and improve animal welfare across all parts of Scotland – and throughout the world.

# Our Roles

## INSPECTOR

The Scottish SPCA is unique among animal charities in that it is the only animal welfare charity in Britain that is a reporting agency to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal.

Inspectors work under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 and have powers to enter and search properties under warrant, seize animals and issue animal welfare notices. Having such authority requires this to be a uniformed role and inspectors must appear smart at all times. 2020 also saw the launch of our new branded vans ensuring the Society is recognised throughout Scotland!

In a typical day Scottish SPCA inspectors will respond to reports of animals in need as well as offering support and advice to members of the public, including pet owners and farmers. In order to build trust within the community, inspectors need to have excellent people skills so that they can work together with people to resolve problems, build bonds with their pets and ensure all welfare needs of the animals are met.

Some of our inspectors work within the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) which is at the forefront of the struggle to eradicate the worst types of animal cruelty.

The SIU work undercover to gather intelligence and investigate people and organised criminal gangs that are suspected to be involved in the most serious crimes against animals such as animal fighting, which includes badger baiting, low-welfare puppy farming and trafficking and wildlife crime such as illegal use of traps and snares and birds of prey persecution.

Our SIU team spearhead Operation Delphin which is a multi-agency taskforce designed to bring low-welfare puppy dealers to justice across the UK. Disrupting the multimillion pound industry is one of the Society's main priorities, and its #SayNoToPuppyDealers campaign has received widespread public and cross-party political support. Find out more at [www.saynotopuppydealers.co.uk](http://www.saynotopuppydealers.co.uk).

## Essential skills required for the role of inspector

- ✔ A minimum of five standard grades.
- ✔ Practical experience with livestock, horses and domestic animals.
- ✔ Excellent customer care and communication skills.
- ✔ Good IT skills.
- ✔ Excellent investigation and case reporting skills.
- ✔ A strong interest in and commitment to animal welfare.
- ✔ Full driving licence.

All inspectors go through a detailed six-month training programme with assessment at two, four and six months. They also receive direct 121 coaching and mentoring from their chief inspector or dedicated mentor.



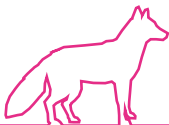
"I have worked at the wildlife centre now for nearly five years as a wildlife assistant. Every day at the wildlife centre is very different and seasonal with larger spells of animals arriving in spring and summer and less in winter, apart from our seals.

I work mainly in the large mammal section with foxes, badgers, otters, deer to name a few, however I enjoy working with all the animals at the centre. These animals that I work with are often orphaned, injured, sick and scared. Every day I try my best to provide these animals with the best possible care and meet their every need whilst they undergo the rehab process for a second chance at life. This is often very difficult, emotional and a real challenge to get some of the animals through, with a lot of time being spent trying to secure their second chances, some even up to a year in care like our otters.

The best part of my job is seeing an animal become healthy again, from tiny babies with around-the-clock feeding at home, growing strong and socialising with other species of the same kind, learning and developing to become a proper wild animal again. Being part of their release is an unforgettable experience and such a privilege that I never take for granted. To stand back and look at the journey where you started and where you finish with these animals having another chance at life is the ultimate reward.

Being able to work with and care for these animals is an honour. I am and think I always will be completely obsessed with them. At the wildlife centre I have found friends which are like family, and a centre which is my home."

**April Dodds, assistant manager,  
National Wildlife Rescue Centre**



## ANIMAL RESCUE OFFICER

The role of a Scottish SPCA animal rescue officer is a challenging and exciting one. Ultimately responsible for rescuing animals in distress, providing advice and guidance for those in charge of animals and playing a lead role in educating the community. Every day is a new experience and learning opportunity, which can involve anything from rescuing animals who have sustained serious injuries to trapped wildlife or orphaned young. Animal rescue officers are required to adapt to all manner of usual and unusual rescues and save thousands of injured animals every single

year. Unfortunately some of these animals are too sick or injured to pull through and animal rescue officers may have to make the hard decision to humanly put these animals to sleep on welfare grounds, full training is always given for this. A large part of the role requires the animal rescue officers to use their initiative and solve problems. They provide a responsive, caring and compassionate service to members of the public and all animals. It is important to maintain a high standard of customer care and communication at all times.

### Essential skills required for the role of animal rescue officer

- ✓ Practical experience working with animals.
- ✓ Previous experience in a customer focused environment.
- ✓ Excellent customer care and communication skills.
- ✓ Good administration skills.
- ✓ Commitment to animal welfare.
- ✓ Full driving licence.

Animal rescue officers will have opportunities to expand their knowledge and skills with job specific training and ensure they have a good foundation of understanding to allow them to progress their career within the Society if they so wish.



"I have been an inspector for 11 years and feel really proud to say that. There are tough days but I feel like I'm really making a difference. What has really surprised me is that I help people too, which is not something I thought before. Being an inspector is not a job to me but more a vocation, you need to be committed to the role, it's long hours that can be physically and emotionally taxing. However, the job satisfaction knowing you are contributing to better animal welfare more than balances this out."

**Stacey Erwin, senior inspector**



"Working as a senior animal rescue officer for the Scottish SPCA is a very rewarding role. I attend a number of calls for injured or distressed animals every day, either to prevent further suffering or to transport animals to our wildlife rescue centre where they will hopefully make a full recovery and be rehabilitated back into the wild. You never know what animal or situation is going to be called in via our helpline next which makes it really interesting. It is a privilege to be able to get up close and handle so many different types of wild animals and know that you are making a huge difference to their wellbeing. I also thoroughly enjoy working with my team of six animal rescue officers in the Tayside region because they are a great bunch of friendly people who are all very passionate about animal welfare."



**Ben Soutar, senior animal rescue officer**





## ANIMAL CARE

Animal care assistants work within our nine animal rescue and rehoming centres situated across Scotland. They help to provide a caring and safe environment for all animals and maximise their comfort by maintaining a high standard of animal husbandry: feeding, cleaning out cages, providing medication and ensuring animals receive daily exercise and socialisation.

Many of the animals in our care have been mistreated and abused, animal care assistants work closely with these animals to re-establish trust and help to find these animals loving forever homes. Animal care assistants regularly have contact with the general public, assisting with enquiries, providing assistance to people wishing to rehome an animal and giving educational tours of the centre.

Wildlife care assistants work within our

National Wildlife Rescue Centre in Fishcross. They provide care and assistance to the many types of wildlife found in Scotland.

These duties include creating a safe environment relative to the animals' needs and similar to their own natural habitat, feeding, maintaining and cleaning out enclosures, providing medication and rehabilitating the animals in order for them to be released back into the wild. Sometimes this can take weeks or months and wildlife care assistants have specialised knowledge and skills in order to successfully care for and rehabilitate these animals. The National Wildlife Rescue Centre regularly admits orphaned animals in to their care. These baby animals require round-the-clock care meaning wildlife care assistants becoming surrogate mothers until such a time where they can fend for themselves.

### Essential skills required for the role of animal care

- ☒ Relevant animal care qualification.
- ☒ Practical experience working with animals.
- ☒ Previous experience in a customer focused environment.
- ☒ Excellent customer care and communication skills.
- ☒ Commitment to animal welfare.
- ☒ Knowledgeable and passionate about Scottish wildlife, natural history and animal welfare (relevant to wildlife care assistant).

There are so many opportunities that exist for animal care assistants in order for them to progress in their career such as, veterinary assisting, inspectorate roles and management roles within the centres.



## VETERINARY SERVICES

The vet team typically includes veterinary surgeons, veterinary nurses and veterinary care assistants. Together they work hard to diagnose, treat and care for every animal within our centres, relieving them of pain and suffering and enabling them to be rehomed or released back to the wild. This could be anything from unwanted or abandoned pets and injured or sick wildlife.

Working as a vet in a rescue centre is very different from working in a private practice. Many of the animals can be fearful due to the new environment, traumatic experiences or pain from pre-existing conditions and need a lot of veterinary care.

Although working within the vet team can be challenging, it is an exciting and varied

role, no two days are ever the same. Vets are almost like detectives, taking clues and piecing them together to work out what is wrong and you will experience and develop new learning continuously.

The Society regularly supports members of the veterinary team with their professional development. Through working in conjunction with colleges and universities the Society helps veterinary nurses gain their professional qualifications and therefore progress within the organisation. The Society also supports students from Universities in particular Glasgow Vet School equipping them with skills and experience in surgery and shelter medicine.

### Essential skills required for the veterinary sector

- ✓ Excellent customer care and communication skills.
- ✓ Commitment to animal welfare.
- ✓ Resilient and calm in face of difficult situations.
- ✓ Full driving licence.

All veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses must be registered with a Professional Body and have the relevant, current qualifications for the role they are applying for.



## EDUCATION OFFICERS

Animal WISE is at the heart of the Educate & Prevent team's activities. We are at the forefront of improving animal welfare globally and have developed an innovative and inspiring programme. Animal WISE uses face-to-face interactions as well as virtual components, such as our E-learning courses in partnership with myAko that were launched the end of 2020. Together these are designed to increase understanding of animal welfare, knowledge of animals within Scotland and the belief that animals are sentient beings and will experience feelings

such as pain, fear and happiness. This in turn will lower the tolerance of animal cruelty within communities.

Education officers are required to be dynamic, enthusiastic and confident communicators and will engage daily with members of the public of all ages to deliver educational workshops throughout schools and the community. They are also required to undertake the role of animal rescue officer during school holidays.

### Essential skills required for the role of education officer

- ✓ Practical experience working with children.
- ✓ Practical experience working with animals.
- ✓ Working with the general public.
- ✓ Previous experience in a customer focused environment.
- ✓ Excellent customer care and communication skills.
- ✓ Commitment to animal welfare.
- ✓ Full driving licence.
- ✓ Aptitude for IT and digital skills. Required to join Disclosure Scotland's PVG Scheme



"The saying goes you should never work with children or animals: well here I am working with both and I love it! Being an education and animal rescue officer is really rewarding. During term time I'm out in schools delivering our free education programme, inspiring young minds and teaching them about animal welfare.

Then, when it comes to the school holidays I get to jump in my van and hit the road to rescue animals in need throughout the north east of Scotland. It's a great balance having the structured days in school and then the excitement of not knowing what you are going to come across on rescue days.



In school, the children are really receptive to our visits, engaging in activities, asking lots of excellent and sometimes challenging questions and they always have a few funny stories to tell. By providing a unique programme each year I get to revisit the schools in my area which creates a fantastic relationship with them. The staff, and children, are always welcoming and pleased to see me, and it's lovely to see how much information the children remember from previous visits. It's wonderful to know we are making a difference to the lives of thousands of children in Scotland by giving them the knowledge and understanding of animal welfare which in turn will help thousands of animals

**Jacki Donald, education officer**

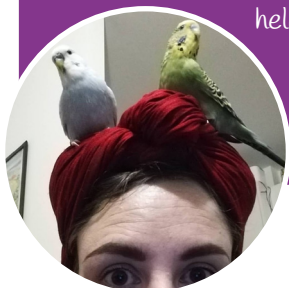
"I've been an HR Adviser with Scottish SPCA for two years now. The work is varied and at times challenging with no two days ever the same. Working for the Society is like being part of a large supportive family. The most satisfying part of my role is knowing that I am supporting the frontline team to create a safer, healthier life for Scotland's animals."

**Carol Cannon, HR advisor**





"What I like about working for the Scottish SPCA as a senior communications and engagement officer is that no two days are the same. I could be working on a social media campaign to rehome animals one day and writing a press release covering a serious court case the next. We work on a lot of campaigns aimed at changing legislation or public attitudes towards issues that affect Scotland's animals so you do have the sense that you're helping to make a difference in a tangible way.



The fact that we get to pat a lot of dogs is also a definite bonus!"

**Kirsty Morrison, senior communications and engagement officer**

"I joined the Society in November 2019 from a background in volunteer development in the creative industries. I have always been passionate about helping individual people and communities to develop skills, confidence and a sense of pride and achievement. Everyone dreams of achieving their goals, however big or small – in this role, I have the opportunity to work with my colleagues across the society to help people of all ages, abilities and circumstances to do just that, and they are helping care for Scotland's animals in the process!

Our volunteers are simply amazing! They give us so much of their time, enthusiasm and energy, and we are incredibly grateful for their support. My ambition is to develop our volunteering programme to involve many more people in many more varied and flexible ways in the future, and also to support my colleagues in getting them the volunteer help they need to make their working days a little less hectic! Seeing my colleagues and our volunteers smile is very motivating!"

**Lesley Toles, volunteering development coordinator**



## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT OFFICERS

Animal Guardians is a bespoke programme working with predominantly primary school aged children across the majority of Scotland.

Youth engagement officers support children on a one-to-one basis, helping to nurture empathy and compassionate behaviour towards all animals. Children are referred to the programme and will meet with the youth engagement officer over several

weeks where they will be encouraged to participate in educational games and activities relating to animal emotions, care and their responsibilities when around animals.

Youth engagement officers are required to have excellent communication skills and an empathetic manner in order to build up trust with children, parents and key professional agencies.

### Essential skills required for the role of youth engagement officer

- ✓ Degree in relevant discipline or equivalent experience of working with young people in a relevant setting.
- ✓ Practical experience working with children.
- ✓ Experience working with children with neurodiversity.
- ✓ Working with the general public.
- ✓ Previous experience in a customer focused environment.
- ✓ Excellent interpersonal skills, in particular ability to network and develop relationships with young people and build links with other agencies.
- ✓ Excellent customer care and communication skills.
- ✓ A commitment to and understanding of the benefits of animal welfare education.
- ✓ Full driving licence.
- ✓ Required to join Disclosure Scotland's PVG Scheme.

The education team take part in continuous training for professional development giving the opportunity to develop additional skills and knowledge to ensure our delivery is inclusive to all.



"I have been an animal care assistant for seven years and I absolutely love my job! Is it hard? Yes. Is it stressful? Yes. But is it worth it? ABSOLUTELY! What I love most is that every day is different! I wasn't built for a mundane job. Yes, at times it can be incredibly sad and overwhelming but there isn't a feeling that beats building up a trust and a friendship with an animal and seeing it off to its new home. That for me makes all the hard stuff so rewarding. I have worked with various animals over the years and have built up my confidence and experience as well as completing my SVQ level 2 with the Society. I enjoyed my SVQ so much the Society is now putting me through my SVQ invigilator course which has really helped me in my senior role for training new staff.

I love to learn, and even more so I love to share that learning with others. This senior role for me has been an absolute honour to do and I feel personally I have helped make a difference to how my centre runs. My dream was always to work for the Scottish SPCA and lucky for me I get to live it.

When I first started I wasn't sure what direction I wanted to go in, but after trialling some shadow days I discovered I loved my centre, colleagues and the animals so much that this was where I belonged and I hope I can continue to progress and grow within this role."



**Ally Bibby, senior animal care assistant**

"The challenges and rewards can be a rollercoaster ride, but the happy endings always outweigh the difficult days. We love hearing how animals are doing in their new homes, especially the ones who needed a lot of treatment and spent a lot of time in our veterinary ward. I was quick to realise how much I loved animal welfare work, I have been here 10 years now and was promoted to senior vet four years ago."

**Jo Neilson, senior vet**



## HELPLINE

Our confidential animal helpline is open 365 days a year and takes an average of more than 540 calls per day. An animal helpline operator is on hand to take initial reports of animal neglect and to offer expert advice to people with concerns about domestic, farm or wild animals.

Each report of an animal welfare issue is tasked to an appropriate inspector or

animal rescue officer. A helpline operative needs to ensure that the call is allocated correctly but also that all details are logged accurately in order for the animal to be located.

You will need to have a calm, professional approach and the ability to communicate effectively with all members of the public.

### Essential skills required for the role of helpline operative

- ✓ Excellent customer care and communication skills.
- ✓ Ability to extract key information from members of the public dealing with stressful situations.
- ✓ Excellent keyboard skills.
- ✓ Ability to take control of a telephone call.
- ✓ Attention to detail and data input accuracy.
- ✓ Commitment to animal welfare.
- ✓ Resilient and calm in the face of difficult situations.
- ✓ Work effectively under pressure in an emergency call situation.





## CORPORATE SERVICES

Our support staff are the heartbeat of the Society, they work hard in the background ensuring frontline staff have the required help and resources to carry out their role. Within these vital teams there is a huge variety of positions.

### PEOPLE AND CULTURE TEAM

The people and culture team focuses on support, learning and development for employees. They provide a responsive, effective and friendly service which supports all aspects of an employee's relationship and engagement with the Society.

### FINANCE

The finance department takes care of the financial affairs of the Society. They handle a wide range of duties, including accounting, insurance matters, payroll and pensions.

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

The Society is dependent on technology such as mobile phones and computer database systems in order to receive and record instances of animal welfare concerns as well as maintaining communication with members of staff. Those working within the IT support the digital infrastructure.

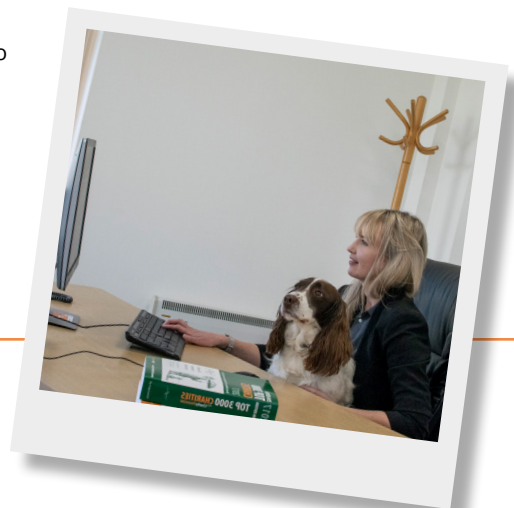
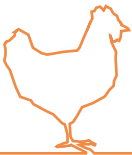
### COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING AND FUNDRAISING

Together they are responsible for creating and implementing campaigns in order to engage with the public and secure income streams.

Those working in communications need to ensure that they connect with their target audience to entertain, increase understanding, affect behaviour or bring about a change in attitude which is vital for an animal welfare charity.

### ADMINISTRATION

Administrators provide support functions to specific advanced roles within every team.



## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteering is a great way to get involved in animal welfare and is such a rewarding way to spend some of your free time. Even the roles that don't involve direct contact with the animals, such as helping out on a busy centre reception desk or assisting with data input at our headquarters, all contribute massively to what we do to improve the quality of life of Scotland's animals.

We have a strong network of enthusiastic fundraising volunteers and dedicated supporters and are keen to build on this and work in close partnership with all our communities.

Our volunteers make such a difference in the work we do to prevent cruelty, promote kindness to and alleviate the suffering of animals. They support us year round, in many different ways across our rescue and rehoming centres, veterinary services, inspectorate, not to mention our National Wildlife Rescue Centre and headquarters.

We offer a wide range of volunteering roles across the Society to suit the different interests and needs of both individuals and groups. Why not take a look at our opportunities today and enjoy the benefits of volunteering!

### Volunteering has so many advantages, these include:

- ✓ A chance to try out something new.
- ✓ A great sense of achievement.
- ✓ Doing something useful and rewarding.
- ✓ Contributing to the wellbeing of Scotland's animals.
- ✓ Being part of a dedicated and professional team.
- ✓ Developing both skills and confidence.



## Who can volunteer?

Our volunteering is open to anyone aged 14 (youth volunteer) or over, although for some of our roles, different age restrictions apply, depending upon the skills and experience required. We welcome volunteers of all ages and backgrounds. Our Equality & Diversity Policy ensures we never discriminate in any of our recruitment.

## How do I volunteer?

To find out more visit [www.scottishspca.org/support/volunteer](http://www.scottishspca.org/support/volunteer)



"Working as a youth engagement officer means I get the opportunity to work on an individual basis with young people from four to 16 years old, across central and eastern Scotland.

I teach them about animal emotions and needs and the correct way to care for all animals. Through participating in different activities we talk a lot about the animals in their homes, how they can help with their daily care and what their responsibilities are when they are interacting with any animals, whether that be a pet or when they are out in the Scottish countryside.

Sometimes my work can be challenging and things don't go quite to plan, but that's what makes it interesting as well. Everyone has good and bad days and I have to make sure I adapt my teaching for that day and that individual young person to suit their needs and make sure we both feel like we have achieved something after every session.

Each session that I participate in helps me develop Animal Guardians further, to ensure that we deliver an educational programme that changes the hearts and minds of young people across Scotland."

**Susan Witton, youth engagement officer**

"I like how the job brings a variety of animals in the centre that includes dogs, cats, birds, reptiles, fish, small animals, exotics and wildlife.

Through the job I have gained a lot of experience while working with animals but also with people through customer care, fundraising activities, talks and tours at schools and the centre.

Just like any job there will be good days and bad and this will include animals coming in to the centres in really bad condition, but the good part of it is seeing that animal who came in abandoned, abused or neglected being rescued and rehabilitated and then getting the love and care it needs and then finding its new forever home with loving new owners."



**Dale Christie, assistant animal rescue and rehoming centre manager**



## Interested?

If you are interested in a career with the Scottish SPCA, all current vacancies are available on our website [www.scottishspca-careers.org/](http://www.scottishspca-careers.org/)



## Have a question?

Get in touch and link to Careers e-mail address





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