

CLAIMS ADVISER - Further Information

Summary

A Claims Adviser will have gained considerable experience (minimum 10 years) from predominantly small animal clinical practice. Excellent communication skills are required. Experience of complaints handling and familiarity with the regulatory requirements of veterinary practice are likely to be advantageous. Keyboard skills and an ability to use modern electronic communications are essential features of the job. A Claims Adviser should be a proven team player.

Job description

Claims Advisers are employees of the Society, working part-time, two or three days per week, Monday to Friday to cover normal office hours, forming part of the Claims Group and reporting to the Technical Services Manager. The Claims Group comprises the Technical Director (an Executive Board member), the Head of Claims (an Executive Committee member), twelve full time Claims Consultants, the Technical Services (advice service) Manager and fourteen part time Claims Advisers. These personnel work independently, mostly from home, but liaising frequently with each other by telephone and email.

Claims Advisers provide immediate advice to our Members and their staff, by telephone and email, on the management of complaints and potential claims. The provision of rapid responses to requests for advice from member veterinary surgeons or practice support staff is an essential aspect of the Society's service. Telephone calls or email exchanges are frequently time-consuming, and a detailed report of the advice given is circulated throughout the Group to ensure a consistent approach.

Claims Advisers have to read and analyse large volumes of case papers, particularly clinical records. Each year, they are required to attend a small number of meetings held in Knutsford and elsewhere.

Claims Advisers are encouraged to maintain some active clinical practice if possible.

Claims Advisers arrange holidays in consultation with their colleagues and subject to ultimate approval by the Technical Services Manager. The workload is inevitably variable and whilst each day's allocation of work is complete by 5pm, most find it necessary to find additional pockets of time through the week in order to keep abreast of their colleagues' activities.

The Society provides a standard package of computer hardware and software to allow operation within the VDS communications system, funded by the Society. An administration team located at the Society's offices in Knutsford provides the necessary support.

New appointments to the position of Claims Adviser

Appointed Claims Advisers will serve an initial probationary period of three months, during which time there will be one week's notice either way, since not all potential Advisers will find the job to their liking. During this time the trainee will be required to familiarise themselves with the nature of claims business and the way in which it is handled by the Group, and to liaise with other members of Claims Group.

Following successful completion of the probationary period the new Adviser enters a structured training period under the close supervision of experienced Claims Advisers acting as mentors.

The Selection Process

Long-listed applicants will be asked to submit responses to written exercises. Short-listed applicants will be invited to interview at Knutsford. Candidates will be assessed by their demonstration of the desired attributes listed in Appendix 1.

Appendix 1

A Claims Adviser should be able to demonstrate the following attributes.

General Qualities

- Good verbal and writing skills, including precise, concise and accurate use of written English
- Good communication skills with individuals of differing educational and professional standards
- Dedication and enthusiasm
- High standards of integrity, honesty and fairness
- Problem solving skills using creative and constructive approaches
- Resilience, stamina and reliability when working under pressure
- Commitment to own personal and professional development

Attitude to work

- A non-judgmental approach
- Respect for confidentiality
- Flexibility to meet new demands and to adapt to change
- Sensitivity to others' reactions

Contact with other Claims Advisers requires

- Loyalty
- Self-criticism
- Self-confidence
- Ability to accept peer-review
- Approachability

Contact with veterinary surgeons and their support staff requires

- Credibility and influence through depth and breadth of expertise
- Respect
- Probity

Working from a remote site requires

- Self-discipline
- Good time management skills
- IT skills
- Self-sufficiency
- Good networking skills
- Ability to maintain an appropriate, mutually helpful, relationship with office staff

Advice Calls require

- Note taking skills or the equivalent
- Patience and the ability to listen
- Tolerance to working pattern being disrupted
- Ability to act decisively having assessed the situation
- Ability to rethink and adapt the advice based on further information
- Ability to divert the caller to a more appropriate source of advice without losing credibility
- Ability to dissect members' draft documents to expose errors, inconsistencies, typos, pitfalls etc
- Ability to differentiate clearly between 'personal' and 'official' advice

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