

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Head of Operational Response
Location:	Hybrid – HQ, Dunfermline, home, and regular travel across Scotland
Hours:	35 hours per week
Salary:	Band 10: £55,109.60 - £61,388.60
Reports To:	Animal Response Director
Reports:	Chief Inspectors; Animal Rescue Team Leaders

Overall Purpose of the Role:

This role holds operational accountability for the Society's Inspectorate and Animal Rescue functions, ensuring that finite resources are deployed effectively, proportionately and in line with organisational priorities to protect animals at greatest risk of suffering.

You will lead the field-based animal response functions, ensuring that the highest standards of animal welfare intervention, investigation, rescue and enforcement are delivered consistently across Scotland.

Working in close partnership with the Head of Centre Operations, you will ensure the seamless transition of animals from field response into Society care, maintaining shared ownership of animal welfare outcomes across the full animal journey.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES:

1. **Effective response and intervention:** You will lead our Inspectorate teams to respond, assess and act in line with our operational animal welfare standards, so we direct resources to where they will have the greatest impact.
2. **Quality investigation & progression:** You will ensure our interventions are supported by a risk-based and information-led approach to animal welfare, where there is strong enforcement quality, robust evidential standards, and effective progression of cases.
3. **Wildlife response:** You will oversee wildlife triage, filed intervention and partnership working with veterinary practices, rehabilitation centres and specialist rescue partners, ensuring wildlife response remains a visible, effective and specialist function.
4. **Continuous improvement:** You will champion a culture of operational excellence where welfare is never compromised, and service delivery and continuous improvement is supported through operational learning, reflective practice and professional development.

5. **Decision-making & compliance:** You will implement clear operational standards and decision-making frameworks that ensure risk, vulnerability, harm and welfare impact are assessed and applied consistently and proportionately across animal response teams.
 6. **Leadership contribution:** You will play an active part in translating strategy into clear Animal Response priorities, and work alongside Veterinary, Behaviour, Rehoming, Fostering, Communications, Fundraising and Corporate Services to support successful delivery of the Society's wider strategic plan.
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CORE RESPONSIBILITIES:

Operational Performance

- You will lead the delivery and embedding of the Society's operating model, ensuring a consistent, risk-based and welfare-led approach to animal response, and how the model can be adapted in response changing demand, emerging risks and welfare challenges.
- You will own the day-to-day operational performance and effective deployment of our Inspectorate and Animal Rescue teams, so they operate safely, efficiently and to a consistent national standard.
- You will provide oversight and command support for significant incidents, large-scale rescues, major cruelty investigations and incidents of national significance, ensuring clear escalation routes and that no frontline team is left to manage serious incidents in isolation.
- You will manage operational budgets and set clear operational plans and key performance measures, maintaining a joined-up national view of service delivery, demand, risk and animal welfare impact.
- You will use operational data, case outcome learnings, quality assurance findings, audits and stakeholder feedback to identify trends, risks and improvement opportunities across the animal response function.

Culture & Leadership

- You will be the trusted point of operational support and escalation for Chief Inspectors and Animal Rescue Team Leaders, providing calm, expert leadership on complex investigations, high-risk incidents, significant animal welfare concerns and major operational challenges.
- You will lead, manage and develop operational leaders across animal response functions, creating a high-performing, accountable and resilient leadership culture.
- You will set clear objectives, support talent development and succession planning, and ensure colleagues have the support and direction required to perform at their best.
- You will work in close collaboration with the Head of Centre Operations to ensure effective transitions of animals entering Society care, strong operational handover, clear welfare planning and shared ownership of animal outcomes.

- You will build and maintain strong external relationships with Police Scotland, COPFS, Local Authorities, veterinary partners, specialist rescues and other agencies to strengthen animal welfare outcomes across Scotland.

Change & Building Capability

- You will work collaboratively across the Society to identify opportunities to strengthen operational effectiveness, improve welfare outcomes and enhance consistency in decision-making.
- You will support the development and embedding of structured learning pathways for operational colleagues, including the Inspector Excellence and Standards Framework (IESF), ensuring that professional standards, operational competence and leadership capability continue to develop across the function.
- You will champion a learning culture that recognises the importance of ongoing development, reflective practice and knowledge sharing, ensuring colleagues are equipped with the skills, confidence and professional standards required to meet the changing demands of animal welfare.
- You will ensure operational teams are appropriately developed to assess and manage human factors, including safeguarding concerns, vulnerability and safety risks associated with animal welfare incidents.

Standards & Compliance

- As the guardian of operational animal welfare standards across all field-based functions, you will maintain oversight of emerging animal welfare trends, demand profiles and operational pressures across Scotland, using insight to inform decision-making, resource allocation and service deployment.
- You will ensure interventions are evidence-led, lawful, proportionate and focused on achieving the greatest welfare impact, embedding consistency in decision-making, investigation standards and operational thresholds.
- You will contribute to the ongoing development of operational systems, processes and decision-making frameworks to ensure the Society remains progressive, evidence-led and effective in delivering animal welfare outcomes.
- You will ensure all field-based operations remain fully compliant with relevant legislation, policy, health and safety requirements and operational risk management processes.
- You will embed a strong culture of colleague safety, lone working compliance and risk awareness, protecting colleagues and volunteers operating in complex and challenging environments.

PERSON SPECIFICATION:

Essential Experience

- Strong operational leadership experience, most likely already operating at senior leadership level within an animal welfare, enforcement, rescue, regulatory or emergency response environment.
- Strong track record of leading geographically dispersed operational teams, raising standards, improving performance and embedding consistency across complex operational environments.
- Experience of operational resource planning, budgeting and effective deployment of resources to drive business outcomes.
- Practiced in fostering an inclusive culture, where feedback and collaboration are promoted to support continuous improvement.
- Experience of partnership working and multi-agency collaboration.
- Experience of organisational change and service transformation.

Essential Knowledge

- Clear understanding of how high-pressure field-based services operate and be knowledgeable in how to lead teams who work in complex, challenging and/or emotionally charged environments.
- Significant knowledge of animal welfare operations and legislation.
- Strong knowledge of investigations and enforcement, ideally with experience of prosecution processes.
- Knowledge of health & safety, safeguarding, operational risk management and regulatory compliance.
- Strong IT, data management and systems skills.

Essential Skills & Behaviours

- A calm, credible and confident decision-maker who others turn to during critical incidents and challenging and complex situations.
- Excellent people and stakeholder management skills, with an ability to inspire, motivate and develop teams and customers.
- A positive, solutions-focused attitude, comfortable with organisational change and driving ambitious transformation across a business.
- A strong attention to detail and an analytical approach.
- Flexible and adaptable to navigate complexity.
- Strong interest and commitment to animal welfare and the Society's purpose, values and objectives; you may have, or have had, one or more animals in your life, or aspire to be close to animals in the future. Regardless of ownership, you will share a view that there is no excuse when it comes to abuse for any animal across Scotland.

Additional relevant criteria:

- Full driving licence
- Flexibility and ability to undertake regular travel and overnight stays
- Role is subject to Disclosure Scotland standard check.