

Becoming a Pet Sitter FAQs

If you want the pleasure of a pet, but don't want the expense, responsibility, or commitment of owning your own, then working as a pet sitter with VIPs could be an ideal alternative.

The benefits:

- You can work for us full or part time and you can often fit other part time work around your pet sitting assignments.
- The work is flexible. So you can choose assignments to fit in with your lifestyle and availability.
- You get to work for a professional company, established for 9 years, which offers ongoing support and advice. (Including veterinary advice.)
- You'll be insured for each assignment, so you're covered should anything untoward happen.
- You get to choose which type of work you'd like to do, from our wide range of services, including cat feeding, dog boarding, live-in house sitting, horse care, dog walking, small mammal and exotic pet care.

How long do pet sitting assignments last?

We have a minimum two day policy on all our bookings, but no maximum policy. So a booking could last anywhere from a long weekend to two months; although the average assignment lasts one to two weeks.

How often can I expect assignments?

We would require you to work approximately three to six months of each year with breaks in between each assignment. We can offer you more than six months work in a year providing you are receiving outstanding feedback from our clients.

Assignments are available all year around but we tend to be busier in the summer months, school holidays, Christmas and bank holidays. But you're under no obligation to take any assignment that is offered if the arrangements don't suit you.

Over time you can quickly build up a regular client base, which means consistent work with familiar pets, and regular money.

How do you allocate assignments?

VIPs' support team takes great care in matching your skills and interests with that of the client's requirements; we also take your location into consideration to save the client travel costs.

We'll always try hard to find you an assignment where you'll have a pleasant and rewarding time with a client's pet.

What experience do I need?

VIPs is owned and operated by veterinary nurses who believe that the care of each of our clients' pets should be of the highest standard possible. So we only recruit very experienced pet lovers and veterinary staff.

We stick to a very high standard of pet care and expect all of our staff to maintain this. The more pet experience you have, the more assignments we can offer you.

What is required of me during an assignment?

You will be required to care for the client's pet as your main priority, and you must be prepared to keep to their daily exercising and feeding routine.

You will also be expected to keep the client's property as clean and tidy as when they left it, and perform light domestic duties such as mail collection, fish feeding, watering house plants, turning on/off lights, and pulling the curtains and blinds.

Do I meet the client before the assignment starts?

Yes, the preliminary meeting with the client is very important as it allows you to discuss their pet's needs in more detail. This meeting is also your opportunity to ensure that you are happy to undertake the assignment. It also gives the client a chance to get to know you.

How long can I leave the pets alone for?

For our dog boarding and live-in dog services, we have very strict rules in place: A dog should not be left unattended for more than four hours maximum each day and only with a client's prior consent. Some clients may not allow you to leave their dog alone for four hours and may request a maximum of two hours.

For our cat feeding, dog walking and day care services, the time spent with the pet is the time paid for by the client.

Are my travel costs and parking paid?

Travel expenses are charged at cost or 40p per mile. If you are using public transport, your my class fare will be reimbursed. The client is responsible for paying your parking and congestion charge at cost.

For our cat services and dog walking we charge a key collection fee of £5 instead of travel expenses, this is paid directly to you.

What if I have a problem whilst on an assignment?

VIPs' support team is available during office hours to help you with any questions or problems you may have. Outside office hours a senior member of the team is contactable on an emergency number should you need help.

Can I take my partner on an assignment with me?

If you'd like to have your partner staying with you on an assignment, they would need to be police checked, insured, and vetted by VIPs, as well having a client's prior permission, before the assignment begins.

What money can I expect to earn?

As we offer a range of services, the rate of pay depends. All fees are worked out in advance by VIPs' support team and you and the client will each be sent a copy of the invoice. You'll always know, in advance, exactly how much you will be paid.

VIPs take a fee from our clients plus the VAT, and you receive the balance. You will be paid directly by the client, not by us, before the assignment begins. Remember, it is your responsibility to declare any income you earn to the Inland Revenue.

Our services explained

House and pet live-in sitter

As a live-in pet sitter you will have to live in a client's home and walk, feed, play with, groom and love their pets. You will be expected to maintain a client's home by doing light domestic duties such as mail collection, fish feeding, watering house plants, turning on/off lights, and pulling curtains and blinds. You are expected to keep the clients property as clean and tidy as when they left.

A dog should not be left unattended for more than four hours maximum each day and only with a client's prior consent.

It is also important that you agree with the client which equipment and facilities may be used during your assignment. You may not help yourself to food or drink (including alcohol) unless you have been given permission to do so. It is important that this issue is clarified at the preliminary meeting.

Dog and small mammal home boarding

For our home boarding service, a client will drop their pet off at your house, and provide food, bedding, toys, medication, lead and collar, food and water bowls. You will be expected to provide a loving family home for the client's pet, and maintain their feeding, grooming and exercising routines.

You'll be required to have a secure garden, ideally with grass, and have a well presented pet friendly home.

Cat feeding and small mammal visiting service

As a pet feeder you are required to go to our clients' houses and feed, water, groom, clear/change litter, and play with the pet for a period of no less than 20 minutes, either once or twice a day.

You may also need to perform light domestic duties such as mail collection, fish feeding, watering house plants, turning on/off lights, and pulling curtains and blinds. You are expected to keep the client's property as clean and tidy as when they left it.

Dog walking

As a dog walker you will be expected to collect the dog from the client's home, do a one hour walk in the area selected by the client, and then drop the dog back off home. You may also be required to clean or dry the dog, or feed him, after the walk.

The client will specify if the dog can be walked on or off the lead and which area they would prefer the dog to be walked.

Doggie daycare services

The doggie day care service can be either in the client's house or in your house and lasts for up to 12 hours. You would be required to care for the dog during this time by walking, feeding and playing with it. You would not be permitted to leave the dog alone during the doggie day care service as this service is charged at an hourly rate.

Horse care

We would only put extremely experienced horse carers on this service as it is a highly skilled job. You would be required to do the following duties:

- Exercising the horse daily or as and when required
- Morning feed and general health check

- Evening feed and general health check
- Turning out
- Bringing in
- Changing rugs
- Mucking out stables
- Grooming
- Watering – both in the stable & paddock