



our pets and people enriching lives,  
one visit at a time

## The Pets As Therapy Temperament Assessment Test

What to expect from the temperament test for your cat.

Please note that your assessment may not be carried out at your home address, it will be held in a neutral environment for you and your pet

### Cats need to....

Walk on a relaxed lead, without excessive pulling. Be happy and secure in a harness or collar and lead

**Why?**

PAT Cats need to be under the handler's control at all times, walking at ease and comfortably in their walking equipment.

Accept being stroked and handled and having their paws, tail and ears checked by the assessor.

**Why?**

PAT Cats must be happy to be petted, sometimes vigorously, by patients or clients. They need to be comfortable having their paws, ears, or tail handled by a stranger. The assessor will check that the cat's nails are clean and trimmed.

PAT Cats need to be happy in the company of everyone.

**Why?**

During a visit you will be approached by strangers, of all ages, PAT Cats should be happy to receive attention and be willing to interact.

Enjoy being held by a stranger without signs of fearfulness, anxiety or attempting to escape.

**Why?**

Being held is not natural for cats and they may not accept it readily. All cats have a natural threshold for being held and PAT Cats need to accept and enjoy being held and cuddled by a stranger.

Be willing to explore but settle quickly in a new environment.

**Why?**

Cats need to be confident and interested in their surroundings but also be able to relax in a new environment. The types of environments that PAT cats are expected to enter are very different from their home environments.

Respond to an approaching stranger and not run away and hide.

**Why?**

Some cats don't like people to approach them directly. A PAT cat needs to accept an approach from a stranger. It can be very upsetting for a patient or client if an animal rejects their approach.

### Handlers need to be able to...

Demonstrate control of their cat on the lead whilst holding a conversation, being aware of the cats needs.

**Why?**

Much of the volunteer's time is spent talking to different people and PAT Cats need to be under the handlers control at all times without causing distraction.

Demonstrate that they can restrict their cat by holding its harness or holding them firmly.

**Why?**

PAT Cats need to accept restraint from the handler in case of an emergency or if the handler needs to withdraw the cat quickly from a recipient. The cat should recover quickly and not be overly stressed.

Show they are aware of the cats mood and body language.

**Why?**

All handlers should be aware of their pets body language and react accordingly in the pets best interests.

Ensure their Cat is secure in their walking equipment.

**Why?**

All pets must be kept on a lead when visiting, it is important the harness fits well and is secure. You should be able to insert 1 or 2 fingers between the harness and cat in all areas. It should not pinch or slip/gape.

Place their Cat onto the lap/bed of the recipient using an appropriate disposable barrier.

**Why?**

If a cat jumps up onto a lap it will risk causing an injury to the recipient with its claws. The purpose of a disposable barrier is to stop the transference of bacteria between recipients. You may still use your own blanket/cover on top of the disposable barrier.

## Deferrals

Assessors are also asked to make note of any other behaviours that they may observe throughout the assessment, for example: jumping up, clawing, or stress behaviours. Such behaviours are not acceptable on Pets As Therapy visits

Sometimes, cats may be deferred following an assessment, you will be invited to be reassessed at a later date.

Below are the main reasons cats are deferred, which you may find useful to consider before organising your assessment. Deferrals are discussed and considered very carefully by the Charity – where there is considered to be an unacceptable risk to the client/recipient that we are visiting, the cat will be deferred. Assessors are trained to conduct the assessment in such a way that these behaviours are assessed fairly and consistently.

**Pulling on the lead** - Cats will be deferred if the assessor notes that they pull or are erratic on the lead. This behaviour indicates that the cat is not happy or under the handler's full control.

**Reluctance/backing away when being fussed** - If the cat displays signs of anxiety or reluctance when being fussed by the assessor, for example, backing away or struggling to get away, they will be deferred because such behaviours suggest a cat that is unwilling or unable to accept close or intense handling.

**Scratching or biting** – This will result in injury to the client, risking infection. Many of the people you visit will have compromised immunity and must be protected from all injury and risks.

**Vocalisations, such as meowing or growling/hissing** - Cats that are vocal during the test will be deferred as this can be indicative of anxiety or discomfort.

**Licking** - Licking is not accepted because it is considered a hygiene risk and may present a risk of infection to certain clients/patients. Licking or excessive cleaning can also be a sign of stress or anxiety.

**Jumping** - The assessor is asked to note whether the cat jumps up or tries to escape/hide and how many times. Jumping up is not allowed because of the danger of causing injury. It also indicates that the cat is not under the handler's full control. Cats should be placed onto the lap of the client/recipient (using an appropriate barrier)

**Unhappy or stressed behaviours** – If the cat displays excessive or long-lasting stress behaviours throughout the assessment, this will indicate they are not quite ready to visit.

**Unfit or unhealthy** – Visiting can be tiring and stressful which can have a greater impact on their health, it is important that the cat is healthy and fit. An unfit or ill cat will have much less tolerance and may behave in a way unsuitable for visiting.

**Dirty or unclipped claws** – Dirty claws will increase the risk of spreading Toxoplasmosis, this is a parasite in some cats faeces and becomes infectious 1 to 5 days after shed in the cats faeces. Daily cleaning of your cats paws, claws and litter tray will help reduce the transfer of this.

For further information please contact the Pets As Therapy National Office, Tel: 01865 671440

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