**Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

Pets As Therapy’s policy towards child protection and safeguarding is to ensure that no encounter with any child up to the age of 18 inclusive, made by any employee or volunteer of the Charity, or by any animal registered with the Charity for the delivery of the Charity’s service, shall result in harm: medical, physical, mental or psychological, to that child.

**No departure from this policy or from the following procedures for applying it will be condoned by the Charity’s Board of Trustees.**

1 The Board reserves the right to liaise with the host establishment and the Disclosure and Barring Service at any time with regards to any volunteer of the Charity or for any applicant who applies to be a volunteer or employee of the Charity.

2 No volunteer is accepted into the Charity unless at least two written references have been obtained certifying that the applicant is of good character. References are obtained from a person independent of the applicant and are checked by the Charity in the event of any doubt either directly with their signatories or, if doubt remains, with the police.

3 Pets As Therapy volunteer visits may only be made to establishments registered with the Charity.

4 Volunteers who make visits to registered establishments must display the correct photographic ID badge issued by the Charity throughout the visit. Any animal accompanying that volunteer must be wearing their corresponding photographic ID badge as issued by the Charity identifying that animal and recording its certification as of sound health and suitable temperament.

5 Throughout any visit to an establishment, the Pets As Therapy volunteer must hold their pet on a secure lead at all times.

6 No volunteer visit may be made on behalf of the Charity to any child in the care of an establishment **without the presence of a member of the establishment’s staff in attendance at all times.**

7 No volunteer visit may be made on behalf of the Charity to any child who is in medical isolation.

8 Any volunteer visit made to any child that is not on behalf of the Charity will **not** be covered by Pets As Therapy’s third party insurance.

9 Any volunteer visit made to any child, with an animal which is not registered with the Charity, will **not** be covered by Pets As Therapy’s third party insurance.

**Please contact Head Office immediately (details below) if you have any concerns about any aspect relating to Child Safeguarding.**

**Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy**

**Aim**

The aim of this policy is to raise awareness of the issues relevant to the prevention of abuse of vulnerable adults and to advise Pets As Therapy Volunteers on what action to take if they witness, suspect or are told of abuse of a person/s that they are visiting on behalf of Pets As Therapy.

**Definitions**

‘A **vulnerable adult** is any person aged 18 years or over who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental, physical, or learning disability, age or illness AND is or may be unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.’

***Department of Health (2000) No Secrets: Guidance on Developing and Implementing Multi-Agency Policies and Procedures to Protect Vulnerable Adults from Abuse***

***‘Abuse*** is the harming of another individual, usually by someone who is in a position of power, trust or authority over that individual. The harm may be physical, psychological or emotional, or it may be directed at exploitation in more vulnerable ways (e.g. misuse of his/hers financial resources).’

***Centre for Policy on Ageing (1996)***

**Types of abuse include:**

* **Physical** e.g. *bodily assaults, or medical maltreatment*
* **Sexual** e.g. *assault or harassment of a sexual nature*
* **Psychological/emotional** e.g. *threats of harm, humiliation, isolation or bullying*
* **Neglect** e.g. *ignoring or deliberately withholding medical or basic care needs*
* **Financial or material** e.g. *theft and fraud, or exploitation*
* **Discriminatory** e.g. *racist or sexist behaviour or language*

**Signs of abuse**

There are many signs that abuse may be occurring and these include:

* **Psychological/emotional signs** e.g. *isolation, poor self-care, withdrawn or agitated*
* **Neglect** e.g. *poor physical condition, or clothing, inadequate diet*
* **Financial/material signs** e.g. *sudden inability to pay bills, unusual or unexplained withdrawal of money from accounts*
* **Discriminatory** e.g. *lack of respect shown towards an individual*

**Other signs**

* Inappropriate use of restraints
* Disclosure by the person themselves
* Sensory deprivation e.g. of glasses or hearing aid
* Restricted access to facilities e.g. toilet or bathing facilities
* You may directly witness something happening

**Advice for volunteers on what to do if you suspect that abuse may be occurring, if you witness something, or if someone discloses something to you during a Pets As Therapy visit.**

**General Guidelines**

* All allegations should be treated seriously
* No abuse is acceptable; some are criminal offences
* Every individual has a duty to take action
* Volunteers should not be expected to cope with the situation alone

**Appropriate courses of action to take**

Volunteers with concerns should discuss them discreetly with their point of contact within the Establishment, or a senior staff member

The first priority is to ensure the safety and protection of the vulnerable adult. If the situation presents an immediate danger, take urgent action by calling the relevant emergency services e.g. Police or Ambulance. Remember to have regard for your own safety – leave the situation if it is not safe for you.

Pets As Therapy advises the following:

**DO:** Stay calm

Listen patiently

Reassure the person involved that they are doing the right thing by telling you

Explain what you intend to do

Report your findings to the relevant person

Write a **factual** account of what you have seen or heard **immediately**

**DON’T:** Appear shocked, disgusted or angry

Press the individual for further details

Make comments or judgements other than to express concern

Promise to keep secrets

Confront the alleged abuser

Risk contaminating any evidence

It is not necessary, or advisable, for you to seek any further evidence.

**Tell someone in authority**

Make it clear that you will need to tell someone (i.e. your point of contact e.g. Manager, Ward Sister etc within the Establishment). However, if the adult states that they do not wish their concerns to be pursued, this should be respected if it is possible to do so. This is only appropriate when consideration has been given to the level of risk to the individual and others and their mental capacity to understand that decision. Their wishes can be overridden in some circumstances, but ***this is a decision for your point of contact to make, not you.***

***Please notify Head Office immediately (contact details below) of any safeguarding incident. We are here to help.***

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