

PETS AS THERAPY

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

The Pets As Therapy Temperament Assessment Test

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.

Dogs need to be able to....

Walk on a relaxed lead, without excessive pulling and without the use of check chains or restraining equipment. The use of Head Collars must be approved by the team at the National Office.

Why?

PAT dogs need to be under the handler's control at all times, without relying on the use of training or behaviour correction aids.

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

Why?

PAT dogs have to accept being patted, often vigorously, by patients or clients. They need to not be overly worried about having their paws, ears, or tail handled by a stranger. The assessor will check that the dog's nails are trimmed short and you should keep the nails short at all times

Take a food treat gently without snatching from the assessor.

Why?

Patients and clients love to be able to give their PAT dog a food treat. It is important that they do not snatch it because some patients, such as older people have very fragile skin.

Respond appropriately to a sudden noise or disturbance in the room whilst being tested.

Why?

PAT dogs have to encounter lots of new and unexpected stimuli – they should not be overly fearful of this and recover quickly.

Handlers need to be able to....

Demonstrate control of their dog on the lead whilst holding a conversation with the assessor

Why?

Much of the volunteer's time is spent talking to different people and PAT dogs need to be able to wait patiently under the handler's control at all times.

Groom their dog's back, chest, stomach and tail.

Why?

If a dog readily accepts grooming by its handler, it demonstrates that the handler has control over their dog's behaviour and the dog is willing to accept their authority.

Demonstrate that they can restrict their dog by holding its collar or holding him/her firmly.

Why?

PAT dogs need to be able to accept restraint from their handlers in case of an emergency in the establishment or if the handler needs to withdraw their dog quickly from a patient or client.

Present their dog in a fit, clean and healthy condition.

Why?

Fit, healthy dogs behave appropriately as PAT dogs under demanding social and physical situations. A well groomed and clean dog is a sign of a responsible pet handler.

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

Please see the next page for the main reasons why dogs are deferred following assessments

Sometimes, dogs are deferred following assessment, you will be invited to be re assessed at a time recommended by your Assessor.

Below are the main reasons why dogs are deferred, which you may find useful to consider before presenting your dog for assessment. Deferrals are discussed and considered very carefully by the Charity - where there is considered to be an unacceptable risk to the clients/patients that we are visiting, the dog will be deferred. Assessors are trained to conduct the test in such a way that these behaviours are assessed fairly and consistently.

Jumping up - Jumping up is the main reason why dogs are deferred. The assessor is asked to note whether the dog jumps up, at whom (assessor or handler) and how many times. Jumping up is not allowed because of the danger of causing injury by knocking somebody over. It also indicates that the dog is not under the handler's full control.

Pawing, or putting paws up - Dogs will be deferred if they put up one or both paws, or offer a paw repeatedly to either the assessor or handler. Pawing can cause considerable injury, particularly to elderly people who have very thin skin and the slower and poorer rates of healing in older people increase the risk of infection.

Pulling on the lead - Dogs will be deferred if the assessor notes that they pull strongly on the lead. This behaviour indicates that the dog is not under the handler's full control.

Reluctance/backing away when being fussed - If the dog displays any 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 dog that is unwilling or unable to accept close or intense handling.

Vocalisations, such as barking or growling - Dogs that bark during the test will be deferred as barking can be indicative of anxiety or discomfort, or another unacceptable behaviour, for example, attention-seeking behaviour toward the handler.

Mouthing - Mouthing is basically an inhibited bite and, as such, is an unacceptable behaviour due to the risk of injury to patients/clients.

Licking - Licking is not accepted because it is considered a hygiene risk and may present a risk of infection to certain clients/patients. Licking can also be a sign of stress or anxiety that a dog displays when it is uncomfortable with a particular situation.

Taking food greedily - Snatching food so that the assessor can feel the dog's teeth is not accepted due to the possible risk of injury to the client/patient if the dog is offered food whilst on a visit.

Considering if your dog may perform any of these behaviours during the test may be a useful indicator of whether it is ready or not to be presented for assessment.

For further information please contact the Pets As Therapy National Office, Tel: 01865 671440
Email reception@petsastherapy.org or visit www.petsastherapy.org