

Confidentiality and Ethical Issues

Confidentiality and the right to privacy

Please respect an individual's right to privacy:

- Confidentiality is an important issue; all that is seen or heard must remain within the establishment including individuals' names, medical conditions etc., unless specific approval is given by the family, the individual and the establishment.
 - The only exception to this is where disclosure is required by law. Please ask your establishment contact for guidance.
- If anyone from the media (including local papers or radio) or the establishment approaches you for a story, please always seek permission from the Pets As Therapy Volunteer Support Team first and use the "Introduction to Pets As Therapy" which is part of the Volunteer's handbook.
- Signed permission must be given for all photographs prior to use, please see your Volunteer's Handbook or contact the Registration Office for a copy of the Publicity Rules and Guidelines.

Ethical Issues

Respect for individuals

- Every individual's dignity, worth and respect must be valued.

Consent to participate in a visit

- All clients, particularly children and vulnerable adults must be given the opportunity to express whether they wish to be involved in a Pets As Therapy visit and have the right to withdraw their participation from that visit at any time without question.

Data collection and storage

- Pets As Therapy volunteers may keep their own notes/diary of their visits, but must be aware of the issues related to data protection. Personal data on individual clients or patients must not be collected or stored without their informed consent or that of a parent/guardian and must only be done so in accordance with Data Protection guidelines.

Additional information

Please refer to the British Psychological Society's Ethical Principles and Guidelines www.bps.org.uk and the Data Protection Act 1998.

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