

**PETS AS
THERAPY**

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

CONTENTS

PAGE

About Pets As Therapy

- Welcome from the Chief Executive 4
- About us 5
- Our vision and values 5
- Who benefits from our service? 6
- Annual subscription 6
- PAT Volunteer clothing 6
- General information 7
- Insurance, identity and security 7

Getting started as a Volunteer PAT Team

- Making contact with your Voluntary Area Co-ordinator 8
- Choosing an Establishment 8
- Patient confidentiality and privacy 9
- If you need to stop visiting 9
- Essential paperwork 9
- Donations 9

Pets As Therapy Visits

- General guidance 10
- Disability awareness 10
- Working with children 11
- Looking after your animal's welfare 13
- Checklist 13

Volunteer Resources

- Dealing with loss 14
- Frequently asked questions 14
- Infection control 14
- Factsheets 16
- Supporting PAT 17

Policies and Procedures

• Charity policy	18
• Equal opportunities policy	20
• Confidentiality policy	20
• GDPR	21
• Complaints procedure	22
• Safeguarding children policy	22
• Safeguarding adults at risk policy	24
• Raw meat- based diet policy	29
• Vaccination policy	29
• Welcome Acknowledgement Form (PAT 7)	30
• Incident Report Form	30
• Feedback	30
• Publicity: Best practice and guidelines	30

Declaration and Forms

• Handbook Declaration	32
• Photography Consent Form	32
• Welcome Acknowledgement Form (PAT 7)	33
• Incident Report Form	36

ABOUT PETS AS THERAPY

Welcome from the Chief Executive

I would like to welcome you personally to Pets As Therapy (PAT). On behalf of the Trustees and Head Office team, thank you for joining us.

I'm proud to say that Pets As Therapy Volunteer Teams are now welcome in hospitals, hospices, nursing and care homes, schools and many other Establishments throughout the UK. Every PAT Volunteer and their pet is hugely appreciated for the part they play in delivering our services to those who need it most.

You have joined a network of highly dedicated Volunteers, making a difference with every visit, enhancing health and wellbeing in the community. You and your pet can help brighten the day for those who may benefit most from interaction with a friendly companion animal and their considerate owner. The recipients of our services may be feeling isolated, stressed, low in confidence, recovering from a medical procedure or coping with a long-term condition and your visit could be the highlight of their week.

I would like to thank you in advance for giving your time and wish you well on your volunteering journey. This Volunteer Handbook is intended to accompany you on that journey. It's full of information, forms and advice which we know you'll find invaluable.

If you have any queries, please contact Head Office on 01865 671440 or email reception@petsastherapy.org.

Kindest regards

Deborah Dow
CEO, Pets As Therapy

Please take the time to read this Volunteer Handbook and sign the Handbook Declaration on page 32 to accept the contents. Please then return the form to Head Office by post or email.

About us

Pets As Therapy (PAT) is a nationwide charity that was founded in 1983 and has grown from one PAT Volunteer and her dog to the thousands of supporters we have today. The therapeutic value of human and animal interaction is now well-recognised and we're the largest provider of organised visits by assessed teams in the UK.

Our therapeutic visits:

- Enhance lives in our communities by providing companionship and friendship. They can also help to tackle loneliness.
- Improve the lives of people experiencing mental and physical health conditions and illnesses, including autism, dementia and stroke victims, through animal-assisted interventions as part of a holistic approach to treatment.
- Improve literacy in children and adults by developing their confidence, interest and enjoyment in reading.

Over 6,000 active visiting PAT Dogs and 100 PAT Cats now work in the UK. Every week these calm and friendly PAT Pets give thousands of people, both young and old, great pleasure simply by talking to them and giving them a pat and a cuddle.

Our vision

To offer PAT teams in ALL communities throughout the UK.

Our values

The following values are important in all that we do.

PASSIONATE

We are passionate about our work, our PAT Volunteers and their PAT Pets.

ACCOUNTABLE

We take personal responsibility for using our resources efficiently, achieving measurable results and being accountable to our PAT Volunteers, service users, sponsors, supporters and the Charity Commission.

PRINCIPLED

We are committed to the highest standards of personal honesty and behaviour, never compromising our reputation and always acting in the best interests of the Charity.

INCLUSIVE

We all work together positively, collectively focussed on achieving our vision. We welcome diversity and believe everyone has a valuable contribution to make, regardless of visible and invisible differences.

AMBITIOUS

We are determined to fully exploit the potential of Pets As Therapy for people throughout the UK, constantly developing new and creative ways to deliver our service.

Who benefits from our service?

We pride ourselves on the fact that Pets As Therapy endeavours to visit and help wherever there is a need for our service. Our three main areas are care homes, hospitals and schools. The majority of PAT Volunteers visit residential care homes, where some residents may feel isolated, confused or lonely. Interaction with a PAT Team can help even the most withdrawn individuals. The companionship of an undemanding animal giving unconditional love is often one of the most missed aspects of residents' lives.

The unique service we provide is also being increasingly recognised by the medical profession. Visits by PAT Volunteers to hospitals not only form an important part of recovery and rehabilitation for patients, they are also much appreciated by staff and patients' family and friends. [Research from institutions such as Lincoln University continues to validate the very real value of the community work undertaken daily by PAT Volunteers and how it complements medical interventions and nursing care.](#)

PAT Volunteers are frequently asked to participate in more proactive ways, such as assisting with phobias (always under professional/clinical supervision), in stroke rehabilitation work, and with people who have severe sensory or physical disabilities or mental health problems.

In 2010, Pets As Therapy launched the very popular Read2Dogs scheme. This helps schoolchildren who find reading aloud in front of their classmates and teacher daunting and challenging. Sharing a story with a PAT Pet, who is non-judgemental and a great listener, is different and has been proven to help children enjoy and benefit greatly from the reading experience.

Note: Pets As Therapy do not make visits to private houses due to safety, security, insurance and supervision issues.

Annual subscription

Liability insurance and associated administration expenses cost the Charity approximately £90 per PAT Volunteer per year. Each PAT Volunteer contributes a small amount towards this in the form of an annual subscription. Pets As Therapy is not a membership organisation. Payment of the annual subscription does not constitute membership or voting rights.

PAT Volunteer clothing

It is not essential to wear official Pets As Therapy clothing, but **all PAT Volunteers and PAT Pets must wear a photo ID badge on all visits.** If you are to appear in publicity, media or an event organised by Head Office, you and your PAT Pet may be asked to wear official Pets As Therapy clothing. If so, you will be able to borrow items from stock. If you prefer to buy your own items, the full range of Volunteer and PAT Pet clothing is available to purchase from our [online store](#).



General information

As well as your photo ID badge, please ensure your PAT Pet wears their photo ID tag on their collar. This shows that the animal has passed the Pets As Therapy temperament assessment. The photo ID badge that PAT Volunteers wear for security at all times when visiting needs a new photo every five years. To update your ID, please email a clear head and shoulders shot to reception@petsastherapy.org and we will update your badge at the next renewal.

Also remember the following:

- Only one registered PAT Pet can accompany you on your visits. You are not insured to visit with an unregistered pet or multiple animals.
- Only you should handle your own PAT Pet. This is to ensure that you have full control of your pet should an emergency situation arise.
- Please ensure your PAT Pet does not jump up, offer a paw or perform 'tricks' on visits. Some people you visit may be elderly and frail. Your pet's nails should be kept short and smooth at all times.
- With small PAT Pets, it may be possible to sit on a chair next to the recipient so that they can stroke the animal. If this is not possible then you may (with the permission of the Establishment and recipient) place your PAT Pet gently and carefully on the patient's/resident's lap or bed **on a disposable pad** which for hygiene purposes can be disposed of after each client.
- **Your PAT Pet must be on a collar and lead held by you at all times.** No long training leads, flexi-leads, extendable leads, slip-leads, head collars, check chains or restraining harnesses should be used. If you wish to walk with a someone you are visiting, please use two leads.
- **You must always be accompanied by a member of the Establishment's staff on all visits (see page22 for more information on safeguarding).**
- If you are unable to visit, or going to be late, please call the Establishment as far ahead as possible.

Note: If you would like to become involved with the Read2Dogs scheme, please email reception@petsastherapy.org for additional guidelines and advice.

Insurance, Identity and Security

Pets As Therapy carries public liability insurance with an indemnity limit of £10million. **In order to comply with the terms of our insurance policy, it is essential that all Pets As Therapy Volunteers adhere to the guidelines and standards of expected behaviour during visits as outlined in this Handbook. Signing and returning the Handbook Declaration to us confirms that you comply with these guidelines and standards.**

Note: You must always be responsible for and accountable for the behaviour of your PAT Pet when visiting an Establishment. **Volunteers must never be left alone with a service user for safeguarding reasons and the protection of both parties.**

If you use your pet in a professional capacity (where you receive payment for your services) outside your Pets As Therapy visits, you will not be covered by the Pets As Therapy liability insurance and therefore must purchase your own insurance.

GETTING STARTED AS A VOLUNTEER PAT TEAM

Making contact with your Voluntary Area Co-ordinator

The first step to begin your induction is to contact your local Voluntary Area Co-ordinator (VAC). Details of your VAC are included in your welcome letter. He or she will be your main point of contact. Once you have received your welcome pack and as soon as you are ready to start visiting, please contact your VAC to become acquainted.

VACs are PAT Volunteers themselves and their focus is to be a local presence to support and guide you, especially while you are starting out. We aim to have VACs throughout the country, but if you do not have a named VAC on your welcome letter, please contact Head Office who will be able to help you.

Choosing an Establishment

Either your Voluntary Area Co-ordinator or Head Office can supply you with a list of local Establishments looking for a PAT Team. The next step is for you to contact them directly, introduce yourself and arrange a mutually convenient time to meet. You may have an Establishment in mind for your visits. Some PAT Volunteers know of a local care home, hospice or hospital they would like to help. This is fine, but **it is essential that the Establishment is registered with Pets As Therapy before your visits commence.**

Online registration is easy and takes only a couple of minutes. Just ask the manager of the Establishment to complete the short [Request a PAT Visit form](#). If the Establishment is not registered, your visits will not be covered by our insurance.

Note: There is a different process and form for the Read2Dogs scheme. Please contact Head Office if you know of an interested school.

When choosing an Establishment, think about the following:

- What are the best days and times for you to go on visits?
- Would you and your PAT Pet feel more comfortable in a nursing home than a hospital ward? It's important that both you and your PAT Pet feel happy, relaxed and at ease.
- It's always better to start with one regular visit and build up from there. The ideal visit would be to an Establishment close to home or work to make it easier to include as part of your normal routine.
- Visits must not last longer than two hours – with a break after an hour for both you and your PAT Pet to have a rest and drink.

All new Establishments requesting a Pets As Therapy visit receive a copy of our Establishment Guidelines when they register, containing information about Pets As Therapy and guidance for supporting you in your voluntary role. If the Establishment does not have a copy, or if you feel an Establishment would particularly benefit from receiving one, please ask them to email reception@petsastherapy.org.

Some Establishments may require further references, police checks, safeguarding or other training, or occupational health interviews. If this is mandatory, you are required to abide by the Establishment's requirements if you wish to visit there. Please make sure that each Establishment you visit also gives you details of all their Health and Safety procedures and any other regulations that you need to comply with. For example, you may be asked to wear a hospital security badge as well as your Pets As Therapy photo ID.

PAT Volunteer Teams must be accompanied/supervised by a member of the Establishment's staff at all times. The Establishment should nominate a designated member of their staff as your point of contact to direct and support your volunteering. They should be able to help you with any queries arising from your visit and they will also welcome any feedback from you.

PAT Pets should not enter food preparation or restricted areas. It is useful to find out what times meals are served and avoid visiting at these times.

Patient confidentiality and privacy

Patient confidentiality is paramount. Be very aware of a person's right to privacy. All that is seen or heard is to remain within the Establishment, including the patient or resident's name, condition, etc, unless specific approval is given by the family, the individual and the Establishment.

This is especially important if you are approached by the media (including local papers or radio) for a story. Always seek permission from Head Office and take care to protect patient confidentiality. Relevant permission must be obtained before divulging patient/client details. If the media approach you, please contact Head Office first for advice. All written articles must be proofed and approved by Head Office before publication.

If you need to stop visiting

If you need to stop your visits either temporarily or permanently, please inform Head Office as soon as possible. You are welcome to inform your contact at the Establishment directly, but do ensure Head Office is aware and you update your record in the online Volunteer Community. If you have a VAC, please also let them know.

All Establishments have the right to terminate our visits at their discretion. If an Establishment asks you to stop your visit, or a programme of visits, please do so immediately and without question. If this does occur, please let Head Office and your VAC know immediately and update your online records.

There are also times when the expectation of the visit is not the same as the reality. We are here to support and help solve any problems. You may just need a more appropriate placement that better suits both you and your PAT Pet. We always aim to find someone to cover a placement, at least temporarily, so do keep us informed.

Essential paperwork

It is essential that PAT Volunteers and Establishments fill in a [Welcome Acknowledgement Form \(PAT 7\)](#) to complete the process before you start visiting. This is the procedure for each Establishment you visit. This must then be returned to Head Office.

If you have any concerns about your visit or the PAT 7 form, please contact your VAC or Head Office.

Donations

Any donations to Pets As Therapy should not be accepted by PAT Volunteers, but sent directly to Head Office.

PETS AS THERAPY VISITS

General guidance

At the start of each visit, check with your designated contact at the Establishment, or a staff member, whether there are any patients/clients whom they feel would particularly benefit from a visit. Ask if any wards/areas are closed off to visitors or whether there is anyone who shouldn't have a visit that day.

When approaching patients, clients or residents, please also note the following:

- **You should be accompanied by a member of staff on EVERY Pets As Therapy visit.**
- Always knock before entering a patient's or resident's room. If the door is closed or a bedside curtain pulled around the bed, stop and check with a staff member to see if the patient or resident would like a visit.
- **If you are in a patient's or resident's room, always make sure a staff member is directly supervising you.**
- Some people may be unsure of or afraid of dogs or cats, others may have allergies. Some may just enjoy looking at your PAT Pet, preferring no direct contact with the animal. Please be sensitive to the recipient's individual needs.
- If you are visiting a person in bed, you can sit your PAT Pet in a chair next to the bed (please use a disposable pad for hygiene purposes) or on your lap by the bed.
- Pets should not be allowed to lick anyone. Please keep your PAT Pet away from a person's face. Take care to avoid IV tubes, dressings, etc, but don't let the presence of these prevent a visit. A person in bed may be exactly the one to benefit most from your friendly visit.
- Never be tempted to move or assist anyone in or out of a bed or chair. Always inform a staff member immediately if anyone asks to be moved, even a very short distance.
- Always be polite, respectful and attentive in your role as a non-judgemental listener.
- Don't assume that patients or residents will be unresponsive to a visit just because they are sitting in chairs or in a bed with their eyes closed or otherwise apparently unaware of their surroundings. You will often be pleasantly surprised by the response received from a minimally interactive patient. Approach such patients and gently encourage interaction. They could stand to benefit most from your visits.
- For more information, please see the Royal College of Nursing's Protocol [Working with Dogs in Health Care Settings](#), published in May 2018.

Disability awareness

Nearly two-thirds of Pets As Therapy visits are to older people in nursing or residential care Establishments. Some may have confusion or dementia issues and this can be quite challenging when you first visit. We recommend that you ask the staff caring for the people you hope to visit for advice on the best way to approach them. Also note the following:

- Visit in a quiet, distraction-free environment if possible.
- Approach the person slowly in their line of sight, smile and gain their attention before speaking.
- Use their name often.
- Speak clearly, slowly and maintain eye contact.
- Never talk about someone in their presence without including them in the conversation.
- Encourage reminiscence, which can provide a source of comfort, as well as an anchor to reality.
- Cultivate a positive and accepting attitude.
- As a PAT Volunteer, be sensitive to signs of tiredness, restlessness, agitation or not engaging with you. Aim to end the visit on a positive note.

Visual impairment

Visually impaired people include those who are partially sighted, have low vision or complete sight loss.

- When you enter the room, speak to the person, telling them who you are in a normal voice.
- It is helpful to describe your PAT Pet, give their name, appearance, background or stories about them. Share their personality traits and body expressions as the visit progresses.
- Be sure to encourage the person to touch your PAT Pet, as tactile stimulation is an extremely important means of gathering information for someone who is visually impaired.
- Always tell the person that you are leaving and give them the opportunity to say goodbye to your pet.
- You may also like to visit [Guide Dogs for the Blind](#) for further information and guidance.

Hearing impairment

A hearing impairment may mean a person has no hearing at all, has hearing loss at a particular range of frequencies or has tinnitus (noise in the ears). It may be congenital or acquired and may affect speech or language development if it occurs early in life.

- Visit in a distraction-free environment with as little background noise as possible.
- Never abruptly begin a conversation. Get the person's attention by facing them and make sure that any available light is shining on your face. They may be able to lip-read and being able to clearly see your mouth will make this much easier.
- Don't raise your voice. Instead, speak in a slow, clear voice facing the person at eye level.
- Use gestures, facial expressions and body language to facilitate understanding and conversation.
- Carry a pen and paper as a hearing-impaired person may prefer this method of communication. The use of basic sign language or Makaton may also be helpful.
- You could also visit for [Hearing Dogs for the Deaf](#) further information and guidance.

Wheelchair users

There are many reasons why people may use a wheelchair, either temporarily, or permanently. When visiting someone in a wheelchair, please note the following:

- If possible, sit or crouch down so that you are at eye level when conversing.
- Don't crowd the person, bend over them or shout.
- Be mindful of the wheels, especially with regards to reducing risk of injury your PAT Pet.

Working with children

Pets As Therapy Volunteers make visits to children in both mainstream and special needs schools, residential settings, children's wards and through specialist referrals, for example clinical psychologists. Many PAT Volunteers are keen to work with children and we are expanding this aspect of our work. Bear in mind your PAT Pet must be able to cope with the different demands of this type of visit, such as higher noise levels, more tactile attention and an increased requirement for an interactive role involving play.

Read2Dogs

The Read2Dogs scheme helps benefit many school children who are challenged by reading. If you are interested in taking part in this programme, please contact reception@petsastherapy.org.

The Kennel Club has more information about the [Bark and Read Foundation](#).

Safeguarding and DBS Checks

Safeguarding is uppermost when working with children. For the child's security and yours, **always make sure that you are supervised at all times**. It is the responsibility of the Establishment to organise this. Please do not continue any visit unaccompanied. It is also important never to discuss anything inappropriate.

You may be required to undergo a Disclosing and Barring Service Check (DBS) if it is mandatory at the Establishment you are visiting. They will organise it with you and should be at no cost to the volunteer. Pets As Therapy does not have a legal obligation or entitlement to routinely undertake DBS Checks on its Volunteers.

Older children may have a different set of needs to younger ones from Pets As Therapy visits. They may want to play, groom or just cuddle your pet. They may say things to an animal that they are unable to say to an adult worker. If you do overhear something which you feel should be passed on to a caseworker or staff member, do so quietly and in confidence. Some children with special needs have challenging behaviours and may have lost some of their inhibitions, so you will need to take this into account when choosing this type of visiting. Please speak discretely to a staff member if you have any concerns or would like guidance.

IMPORTANT: Please read the Pets As Therapy children safeguarding policy on page 16.

Mainstream schools

Pets As Therapy Volunteers are often invited to attend school assemblies to explain the work that we do in the community. It is a great opportunity for us to show what responsible dog/cat owners can achieve with their very special pets. Pets As Therapy is also working towards schools' projects where we will be called on to visit on a regular basis. School visiting is unlike any other visit as it is likely to involve high noise levels, running pupils and the possibility that your PAT Pet could get crowded and overwhelmed. Please be sure your pet is not stressed and can cope with this type of visiting. You can also read more about [Therapy and Nurture visits](#).

Children's hospital wards

As the benefits of Pets As Therapy's service become increasingly recognised, we are being invited to visit a greater number of children's wards. As emphasised above, you must be fully aware of and abide by Pets As Therapy's Safeguarding Policies when visiting young patients in order to protect the child, yourself and the Charity.

- **All interactions with children must be supervised either by staff or parents.** You must never be left alone with a child.
- You must sign in and make staff aware of your presence before going onto the ward.
- Check if any of the children are asthmatic, allergic to animals, or not to be visited for any other reason. If so, please keep away from them.
- Be aware of where all the equipment is and check that all drips are safely out of the way before allowing your PAT Pet near beds or chairs.

Working with phobic children

Pets As Therapy regularly receives requests from the medical profession to assist with the treatment of children (and adults) suffering with a dog or cat phobia. While we are always willing to offer assistance, it is vital that a healthcare professional, who is experienced in dealing with phobias, always supervises any involvement. This is to protect the patient, you and your PAT Pet. The majority of this work comes through referral, directly to Head Office. If you are approached directly to assist with a phobia, please contact us so that you can be given the correct guidelines. Working to relieve phobia is amazingly rewarding and when it is carried out correctly, great progress can be made.

Looking after your animal's welfare

Although your pet will have successfully passed the temperament assessment, not every pet will be suited to every type of visit. It may take some time to find a suitable placement. Be aware of the following:

- PAT visits may be unlike anything else that your PAT Pet has experienced. It can be tiring and quite stressful at first with new smells, sights and sounds. Some Establishments are hot, which is also tiring for your pet.
- Know your pet's normal behaviour and make sure you are alert to any behavioural changes before, during and after the visit, which may indicate that the animal is finding it stressful. Pets As Therapy reserves the right to undertake spot temperament checks on registered PAT Pets.
- Visit lengths should be kept short enough so that your PAT Pet is still enjoying the experience at the end.
- Be alert and note if your PAT Pet is trying to pick up anything from the floor – there may be a dropped pill or something else hazardous to its health.
- If someone wants to give your PAT Pet a treat, ensure that it is one that you provide so that it does not receive anything inappropriate, or isn't overfed. You could also offer to take the treat home – the act of saving the treat for your PAT Pet can be very important to a resident or patient and means a great deal.
- Always transport your PAT Cat safely in and out of your chosen Establishment in a travelling container. Watch out for signs of stress as many Establishments can be very warm and many different people may handle your PAT Cat within a short period of time.

Checklist

- **Every Establishment you choose to visit must be registered with Pets As Therapy before your first visit.**
- **If you know of a school that is interested in joining the Read2Dogs scheme, you must contact Head Office who will ensure the necessary paperwork is in place.**
- **Please take a Welcome Acknowledgement Form (PAT 7) with you to be completed at each new Establishment before your visits start.**
- **When working with phobic children and adults, it is vital that a healthcare professional, who is experienced in dealing with phobias, always supervises any involvement.**

VOLUNTEER RESOURCES

Dealing with loss

Many of Pets As Therapy's visiting services benefit frail older people and unfortunately, dealing with the loss of a resident can be a common occurrence and will often be the saddest part of your visiting experience. We hope that you will feel supported throughout your time with us. You can always call Head Office or speak to your local VAC if you need help through a difficult time.

Frequently asked questions

Some common queries and their answers.

Frequently asked questions	Answers
I don't have a local Voluntary Area Co-ordinator, how can I meet other local PAT Volunteers?	Unfortunately, not all PAT Volunteers will have an allocated Voluntary Area Co-ordinator. The Head Office team are there to assist in this case. We can help you find suitable places to visit and can also put you in touch with other local Volunteers.
I can't find a suitable placement on your waiting list. Can I approach someone myself?	Some Volunteers join Pets As Therapy because they know of an Establishment that they think would benefit from a visit from a PAT Team. Please feel free to approach new Establishments but ensure that they register their details on our website to request a PAT visit. The Welcome Acknowledgement Form (PAT 7) must be completed, signed and returned to Head Office. There is a separate process for Schools interested in the Read2Dogs scheme. Please contact Head Office.
I'm interested in becoming involved in more specialist aspects, such as phobia or stroke rehabilitation work. How do I go about this?	Please contact reception@petsastherapy.org . We maintain lists of PAT Volunteers who are interested in these areas of our service and we can put you in touch with an Establishment should we receive a referral.
Why does my PAT Pet have to stay on a lead?	Your PAT Pet must be under your control at all times, so it is vital that they stay on a lead and that you always have hold of the other end. This is for the safety of both the people you visit and your PAT Pet.
Can my children come with me on Pets As Therapy visits?	Your children can only accompany you if you have a Family Subscription and your Establishment has agreed. Children must be aged between eight and 18 years.
Can I take a friend with me when I visit?	No. This is for safeguarding purposes. All our PAT Volunteers are reference-checked before they can start visiting.
I've been asked to give a talk about my Pets As Therapy work. How do I go about this?	Please see our website for Speakers' Notes. You can also contact Head Office for posters and leaflets to support your talk. We may also be able to help you with any questions about content.

Infection control

If you are visiting a hospital, you must take extra care with hygiene in accordance with the Establishment's rules and make sure that both you and your PAT Pet are kept safe. We advise that no Pets As Therapy Volunteers have contact with any patient with MRSA, any other infection or open wounds. In addition, you should not visit a hospital if you or your PAT Pet has any open wounds. Adherence to hand-washing regimes will also reduce your risk of exposure to many infections.

Pets As Therapy does NOT permit raw meat or unpasteurised milk to be fed to PAT Pets due to the potential risk of listeria, salmonella, etc, being transferred to recipients of our service. For further information, contact Head Office or see our policy on raw meat-based diets on page 29.

Also read the Royal College of Nursing's Protocol [*Working with Dogs in Health Care Settings*](#), published in May 2018.

Pets As Therapy Factsheets

The following are all available on our [website](#)

No	Factsheet
1	The application and registration process
2	Volunteer agreement
3	Dog temperament assessment test – what to expect
4	Cat temperament assessment test – what to expect
5	Where to visit
6	The first visit
7	General guidelines on conducting a visit
8	Confidentiality and ethical issues
9	Approaching and communicating with patients and clients – a person who is confused
10	Approaching and communicating with patients and clients – a visually impaired person
11	Approaching and communicating with patients and clients – a hearing-impaired person
12	Approaching and communicating with patients and clients – a wheelchair user
13	Approaching and communicating with patients and clients – working with children
14	General guidelines when working with stroke patients
15	Dealing with loss
16	The care and welfare of PAT Dogs and PAT Cats – pre-visit considerations
17	The care and welfare of PAT Dogs and PAT Cats during visits
18	The welfare of PAT Dogs and PAT Cats – general guidelines
19	The care and welfare of PAT Dogs and PAT Cats – MRSA
22	Where does the money go?
23	Fundraising for Pets As Therapy
24	Family subscriptions

Supporting PAT

There are many ways you can support Pets As Therapy. Here are a few suggestions:

- Help at an event or promotional stand either locally or nationally.
- Become a Temperament Assessor.
- Become a Voluntary Area Co-ordinator for your area.
- Get involved with your local group for socialising and events.
- Fundraise, perhaps with other local Volunteers. You will find a Fundraising Pack with posters, ideas, sponsorship forms, etc under the 'Support Us' tab at www.petsastherapy.org
- Recruit new Pets As Therapy Volunteers or non-visiting Supporters.
- Become involved with special projects.
- Work with professionals to help alleviate phobias.
- Get involved with the Read2Dogs scheme.

If you would like to help with any of the above, please contact Head Office. And let us know of any other ideas.

POLICIES AND PRODEDURES

Charity Policy

Aims and objectives of Pets As Therapy

- The primary aim of Pets As Therapy is to bring temporary but regular animal companionship and comfort to patients/residents in hospitals, hospices, day care centres, nursing homes, etc, by means of visits from PAT Volunteers and their registered, healthy, temperament-tested PAT Pets.
- Pets As Therapy also undertakes to assist the medical or nursing professions in the treatment of phobic patients or those with communication difficulties, under the supervision of appropriate professional staff and subject to the availability and willingness of PAT Volunteers with suitable PAT Pets in the locality of the patient.

Acknowledgement

- The Pets As Therapy Charity exists to relieve human sickness, suffering and distress.
- Pets As Therapy acknowledges that PAT Volunteers and their PAT Pets are a major national and local resource and make a crucial contribution to the aims and objectives of the Charity.
- A PAT Volunteer is a person who does unpaid voluntary work on behalf of Pets As Therapy.
- While the time, energy and skills given by our PAT Volunteers and their PAT Pets sustain the work of the Charity, it has been proven that voluntary work also benefits PAT Volunteers themselves.

The Charity's policy is pursuing its aims and objectives as follows:

- To establish clear principles for the involvement of PAT Volunteers and their PAT Pets.
- To clarify the role of PAT Volunteers and address the relationship between PAT Volunteers, those who engage them and those who receive their services.
- To recognise the respective roles, rights and responsibilities of PAT Volunteers, their PAT Pets, the Charity, its caring institutions, the patients and their careers, both lay and professional.
- To demonstrate the commitment Pets As Therapy feels towards the interests of those who benefit from the work of our PAT Volunteers.
- To help ensure the ongoing quality of both the volunteering opportunities on offer and the work carried out by our PAT Volunteers.
- To give a framework for recruiting and supporting PAT Volunteers, including people from under-represented groups.

General principles

- Pets As Therapy will employ an equal opportunities programme when recruiting and selecting PAT Volunteers.
- All PAT Volunteers will be required to complete an application form and agree to follow regimes of awareness of their pet's good health under the supervisions of a qualified veterinary practitioner and to the temperament testing of their PAT Pet by a person qualified to assess its suitability for the work of the Charity.
- PAT Volunteers may at any time contact Pets As Therapy if they have concerns about the nature of their voluntary work or are not completely happy with their placements.
- PAT Volunteers will be encouraged to provide each other with mutual support and will have a named contact within the Charity that they should notify in the event of a grievance about any aspect of their work for Pets As Therapy.
- PAT Volunteers will supply two referees from whom satisfactory references will be obtained prior to the Volunteer being accepted by Pets As Therapy.
- PAT Volunteers will abide by all reasonable requests from Establishments visited.

Principles of good practice

- During their voluntary work on behalf of Pets As Therapy, PAT Volunteers will strive to ensure that they and their PAT Pets are never put at risk.
- PAT Volunteers will at all times act in accordance with the advice and wishes of the medical, nursing or caring staff but within PAT guidelines.

Rights and responsibilities of PAT Volunteers

In engaging PAT Volunteers, Pets As Therapy recognises the right of PAT Volunteers to:

- Know what is expected of them and to be given clear information.
- Be shown appreciation.
- Have safe working conditions and be free from discrimination.
- Know their rights and responsibilities.
- Withdraw from voluntary work at any time.

In carrying out their voluntary work for Pets As Therapy, PAT Volunteers have the responsibility to:

- Conduct themselves in a way which corresponds to the aims and values of the Charity.
- Respect patients' confidentiality, dignity, wishes and privacy.
- Present their PAT Pets to Establishments being visited in a condition acceptable to the medical or nursing staff.
- Always present their PAT Pets to the Establishment in a good health, in a clean and well-groomed state which will not cause concern to the Establishment, the patients, their carers or the Charity.

Voluntary Area Co-ordinators are in the trusted position to support the vision, strategy and direction set by the Board of Trustees. They are expected to support the Board, management team and staff at all times, and in conveying messages from Head Office to other PAT Volunteers or in the public domain, should do so appropriately without prejudice or their own personal opinion.

Rights and responsibilities of the Charity

Pets As Therapy acknowledges its responsibility to:

- Inform, advise, guide and support its PAT Volunteers.
- Consult with its PAT Volunteers on any matters which may affect them.

Pets As Therapy reserves the right to:

- Request references for PAT Volunteers.
- Decline offers from applicants at its discretion.
- Terminate the services of any Volunteer at its discretion, without question or appeal.

Rights and responsibilities of patients and their carers

- Patients and/or residents being visited by PAT Volunteers and their PAT Pets have the right to refuse to be present at the time of, or in the same room as, the PAT Volunteer and their PAT Pet.
- Where patients and/or residents are either not fully responsible for their actions or not in complete control of their actions or reflexes, it will be the responsibility of the PAT Volunteer to safeguard their PAT Pet from potential harm.

Rights of Volunteers' PAT Pets

- To be treated with care, respect and priority consideration in the conduct of their role.
- To be given adequate exercise for the relief of nature prior to a visit at an Establishment.
- To have freely available water during their visit.
- To never be exploited or put in situations with which they are physically or temperamentally unable to cope.

Failure to adhere to good practice will result in immediate deregistration from Pets As Therapy.

Equal opportunities policy

It is the policy of Pets As Therapy that:

- No employee, client, beneficiary or PAT Volunteer is to receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, religion, gender, visible or invisible disability, age or sexual orientation or is to be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable.
- Our recruitment policy ensures that all employees and PAT Volunteers are advised of, undertake to abide by, and to apply our equal opportunities policy.

Confidentiality policy

PAT employees

- All records maintained by the Charity are confidential to the Charity. No details pertaining to PAT Volunteers, Establishments visited, or beneficiaries are to be communicated to any third party except by express permission of the Chief Executive. This information is subject to the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Financial details including salaries and expenses, payments to suppliers and sources of income are confidential to Board Members of the Charity and are to be treated as strictly private with the exception of those accounting details that are legally in the public domain.
- Breach of confidentiality could be damaging to the Charity and will be treated as a serious breach of trust.

PAT Volunteers/Voluntary Area Co-ordinators

- The PAT Volunteer represents the public face of the organisation. Visiting Establishments brings PAT Volunteers into contact with a wide variety of people, nursing staff, doctors, patients, inmates, children, carers, etc. It is vital that any information learned during visits remains strictly confidential.
- It must be remembered that many beneficiaries of Pets As Therapy visits are vulnerable people. Should the PAT Volunteer wish to pass any details to their Voluntary Area Co-ordinator this must be agreed by a senior staff member of the Establishment concerned.
- No details concerning a patient's condition, medication, etc, should be discussed with any third party. Breach of confidentiality may lead to deregistration of the PAT Volunteer concerned.

Global Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

On 25 May 2018 the data protection law changed to a new EU Directive called GDPR.

How does PAT use data?

Pets As Therapy collects and holds personal data about individuals in order that they may volunteer for the Charity or receive our services and information. Personal data identifies an individual. It may include an individual's name, postal address, telephone number and financial details. It also includes an identifiable person in a photograph or video material. Pets As Therapy is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

The legal basis for holding and processing personal information and data

PAT Volunteers and prospective volunteers give their permission (consent) for PAT to process their data via the online application process for the purpose of volunteering and supporting Pets As Therapy. In addition to their consent, we rely on legitimate interest to continue to carry out the Charity's work.

The GDPR 2018 requires that any personal data shall:

- Be obtained and processed fairly and lawfully
- Be obtained for a specific and lawful purpose and not be processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose
- Be adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Not be kept for longer than necessary
- Be processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- Be kept safe from unauthorised access, accidental loss or destruction
- Not be transferred to or stored in a country outside the European Economic Area. (Note that storage such as Microsoft One Drive and Apple iCloud storage is physically located in the USA.)

What information should Voluntary Area Co-ordinators and Assessors hold?

Voluntary Area Co-ordinators and Assessors should only hold information on PAT Volunteers that is necessary for our charitable business purposes, such as name, address, dates and detail of assessments and Establishments visited. You should hold the minimum necessary and should use the regular updates from Head Office to keep your information up to date. When you get a new edition, the previous one should be destroyed. This applies to both electronic and paper files.

What data should be destroyed?

Out-of-date information that has been printed, such as details of retired Volunteers, historic assessments, key names and contact details of inactive Establishments should be shredded or burnt. Out-of-date digital data such as email correspondence and email addresses should be permanently deleted from all computers.

How should data be protected?

All personal information should be held as securely as possible. Computers should be password protected. Computers used for PAT data should not be used by others, including other family members. If you have an encryption programme such as Microsoft BitLocker or Mac FileVault available on your machine, please use it to help protect our data.

The 2018 regulations put the onus on PAT to prove that anyone processing data/using PAT data on PAT's behalf is doing so responsibly and can demonstrate that they are. This includes simple security – locking PAT papers away, locking away laptops with PAT data on them when you go on holiday.

What happens if there is a breach or possible breach?

Any breach, unauthorised access to or use of or loss of PAT data such as lists of volunteers' personal information or contact details of establishments should be reported immediately to Helen Brooker, PAT Data Administrator and the PAT CEO who is the designated Data Protection Officer.

PAT has a duty to report breaches and potential breaches to the ICO. Reporting early is advisable. If you need any support in destroying information or records, please do not hesitate to contact Helen Brooker on 01865 671440. If you have any questions or require further advice, feel free to contact Head Office.

Complaints procedure

Complaints from users regarding the activities of PAT Volunteer visits and/or their PAT Pets will be addressed initially to Head Office who will deal with the complainant. If no satisfactory resolution is reached, the complaint will be passed, with all relevant history, to the Chief Executive or Board for action.

Complaints from PAT Volunteers will be addressed initially to their local Voluntary Area Co-ordinator for resolution. If no satisfactory resolution is reached, or if the PAT Volunteer has no Voluntary Area Co-ordinator, the complaint will be passed, with all relevant history, to Head Office for action.

Any complaints relating to the policies or procedures of the Charity will be passed to Head Office. In all cases, copies of relevant correspondence relating to individual complaints must be passed to Head Office together with details of action agreed and/or taken.

Safeguarding children policy

Pets As Therapy acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and Charity Commission requirements.

This policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all children have a positive and enjoyable experience in a safe and child centred environment and are protected from abuse whilst participating in an activity with a Pets As Therapy Volunteer.

Pets As Therapy acknowledges that some children, including disabled children, young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

As part of our safeguarding children policy Pets As Therapy will:

- Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people. This forms part of the memorandum with establishments.
- Ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of reported incidents/concerns of abuse when reported and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern.
- Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- Ensure robust safeguarding reporting mechanisms to the local safeguarding children leads are in operation and concerns are reported without delay.

- 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.
- 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.
- Pets As Therapy Volunteer visits may only be made to Establishments registered with the Charity.
- 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 PAT 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.
- Throughout any visit to an Establishment, the Volunteer must hold their pet on a secure lead at all times.
- No PAT 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.**
- No PAT Volunteer visit may be made on behalf of the Charity to any child who is in medical isolation.
- Any PAT 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.
- Any PAT 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.

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in Pets As Therapy. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

Monitoring

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- as required by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, Charity Commission and Pets As Therapy Charity
- as a result of any other significant change or event.

Please contact Head Office immediately on 01865 671440 if you have any concerns about any aspect relating to our children safeguarding policy.

Safeguarding adults at risk 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

Safeguarding adults at risk means protecting their right to live in safety and free from abuse and neglect.

The Care Act 2014 sets out safeguarding duties for adults at risk which applies to any charity working with anyone aged 18 or over who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs), and
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

An adult at risk of abuse may:

- have an illness affecting their mental or physical health
- have a learning disability
- suffer from drug or alcohol problems
- be frail.

It is of particular importance for people who, because of their situation or circumstances, are unable to keep themselves safe. Some adults receiving health care may be at greater risk from harm than others, sometimes as a complication of their presenting condition and their individual circumstances. However, any adult can be subject to abuse, whether a patient, visitor, relative, carer, or employee.

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

Key safeguarding principles

The Care Act (2014) has set out six key principles as below that underpin all safeguarding work.

Empowerment: People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent. 'I am asked what I want as the outcomes of the safeguarding process and these directly affect what happens.'

Prevention: It is better to take action before harm occurs. 'I receive clear and simple information about what abuse, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help.'

Proportionality: The least intrusive responsive appropriate to the risk presented. 'I am sure the professional will work in my best interest, as I see them, and they will only get involved as much as needed.'

Protection: Support and representation for those in greatest need. 'I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I am able to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent which I want.'

Partnership: Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse. 'I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together and will get the best result for me.'

Accountability: Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding. 'I understand the role of everyone in my life and so do they.'

Forms of abuse

Some forms of abuse are listed here but the Care Act 2014 does not limit what constitutes abuse or neglect to this list only. The specific circumstances of an individual case must always be considered.

Physical abuse: This includes assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

Domestic violence: This includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence.

Sexual abuse: This includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Sexual exploitation: Involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where adults at risk (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (for example, food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Psychological abuse: This includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or support networks.

Financial or material abuse: This includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Modern slavery: This encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Discriminatory abuse: This includes forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment because of race, gender, gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Organisational abuse: This includes poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to ongoing ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, and practices within an organisation.

Neglect and acts of omission: This includes ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of necessities of life such as or the withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. If a pressure ulcer is believed to have been caused by neglect or abuse it must be reported and escalated using the safeguarding processes.

Self-neglect: This covers a wide range of behaviour such as neglecting to care for one's own personal hygiene, health and surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Female genital mutilation (FGM): This includes females who may have had FGM or are at risk of having FGM. FGM is a procedure where the female genital organs are injured or changed, but there is no medical reason for this. It can seriously harm the health of women and girls in the long term. It is illegal to practise FGM in the UK or to take girls under the age of 18 who are British nationals or permanent residents of the UK abroad for FGM whether or not it is lawful in another country. If a vulnerable adult is identified as having had or being at risk of FGM, this should be reported using the safeguarding processes to protect vulnerable adults.

Forced marriage: This is where there is concern that someone is being forced into a marriage they do not or cannot consent to.

Radicalisation: Radicalisation is comparable to other forms of exploitation. The aim of radicalisation is to attract people to their reasoning, inspire new recruits and embed their extreme views and persuade vulnerable individuals of the legitimacy of their cause. This may be direct through a relationship, or through social media. There are a number of factors that may make the individual susceptible to exploitation by violent extremists. None of these factors should be considered in isolation but in conjunction with the particular circumstances of the individual. Safeguarding vulnerable people from radicalisation is no different from safeguarding them from any other forms of harm. If staff are concerned that an individual may be at risk of radicalisation, they should treat this as they would any other safeguarding issue; and escalate it using the safeguarding processes.

Preventing abuse

It is always better to take action before abuse occurs and Pets as Therapy aims to reduce the risk of abuse occurring by:

- Ensuring all Trustees have up-to-date training and knowledge of safeguarding adults including what their responsibilities are as a Trustee.
- All PAT Volunteers understand the charities safeguarding adult's policy and procedure.
- Ensuring all PAT Volunteers understand how to recognise, and report suspected abuse.
- Reporting concerns to the local authority safeguarding lead as soon as they are raised to the Charity.
- Keeping up-to-date records of the memorandum of understanding between the Establishments and Pets As Therapy.
- Cooperate with safeguarding enquiries lead by the local authority or police as appropriate.
- The Board reserves the right to liaise with the host establishment and the Disclosure and Barring Service at any time with regards to any PAT Volunteer of the Charity or for any applicant who applies to be a PAT Volunteer or employee of the Charity.
- No PAT 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.
- Pets As Therapy Volunteer visits may only be made to Establishments registered with the Charity.
- 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 PAT 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.
- Throughout any visit to an Establishment, the Pets As Therapy Volunteer must hold their pet on a secure lead at all times.
- No PAT Volunteer visit may be made on behalf of the Charity to any child or adult who is in medical isolation.
- No PAT Volunteer visit may be made on behalf of the Charity to any adult in the care of an Establishment **without the presence of a member of the Establishment's staff in attendance at all times.**
- Any PAT Volunteer visit made to any adult at risk that is not on behalf of the Charity will **not** be covered by Pets as Therapy's third-party insurance.
- Any PAT Volunteer visit made to any adult, with an animal which is not registered with the Charity, will **not** be covered by Pets As Therapy's third-party insurance.

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, please note:

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

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, for example 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 a 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 (your point of contact, for example a manager or ward sister 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 on 01865 671440 of any safeguarding incident. We are here to help. More information can be found on the [Volunteering England](#) website or [Charity Commission](#) website.

Raw meat-based diet policy

Pets As Therapy has rigorously considered the potential risks posed when feeding pets a raw meat-based diet. Raw meat can contain not only parasites, but also the bacteria causing such serious infectious diseases as E. coli, salmonella and listeria which can be extremely dangerous to humans. These bacteria are **not** killed by freezing the meat.

In the light of recent scientific and medical advice from a number of veterinary consultants, we have updated our guidelines with the aim of minimising any health risks associated with PAT Pet visits to the young, elderly and immuno-compromised recipients of our service.

The Royal College of Nursing, and an increasing number of NHS Trusts and education authorities, now state in their Infection Prevention and Control Policies that they will not accept visits from therapy dogs fed on raw meat. In order to ensure that PAT Dogs are considered safe to visit schools and hospitals in future, it is our duty of care to comply. Therefore, **PAT Pets should not be fed raw meat or unpasteurised milk**. Safeguarding our clients is our key responsibility, so your understanding and co-operation in this matter is much appreciated.

Vaccinations policy

Pets As Therapy regularly reviews its vaccination protocols as part of our ongoing duty of care to minimise any risk to our clients and be pro-active in infection control and disease prevention. We aim to provide the best and safest possible service to the people in hospitals, care homes, hospices, schools and other Establishments we visit every day, many of whom are children, elderly and immuno-compromised.

We operate within strict and frequently updated agreements in partnership with NHS Trusts, education authorities and private long-term care establishments. Minimising the risk to patients and residents from zoonotic diseases which can be passed to humans from visiting animals is one of our highest priorities. Zoonotic diseases in dogs include leptospirosis, therefore all dogs visiting Establishments on behalf of Pets as Therapy **must** receive an initial course of inoculations against leptospirosis. Leptospirosis booster vaccinations then must be administered annually.

A copy of the dog's current vaccination certificate must be forwarded to Head Office as part of the annual Volunteer renewal process.

We also highly recommend that PAT Dogs visiting Establishments **should** receive inoculations against distemper, hepatitis and parvovirus at the frequency recommended by your vet. Pets As Therapy does not accept homeopathic vaccinations.

Welcome Acknowledgement Form (PAT 7)

The Welcome Acknowledgement Form (PAT 7) needs to be completed by both you and the Establishment when you first start visiting. You will find this on page 22 or on our [website](#).

Please take a Welcome Acknowledgement Form along on the first visit to each new Establishment. Complete the appropriate part and ask the authorised contact at the Establishment to complete the rest and sign the Establishment Declaration on the reverse. They should copy all pages of the form for their files.

It is essential that you return a copy to Head Office for our records. You may like to also keep a copy.

The completion and return of the Welcome Acknowledgement Form is vital as we must keep our records updated. It tells us where you are visiting, the type of visiting you're doing and it also provides general information on the ages and abilities of those who are benefiting from our service. It is also a requirement of Pets As Therapy's insurance cover that we hold signed Welcome Acknowledgement Forms.

Incident Report Form

Since 1983, our assessment process has ensured that PAT Pets are of the very highest standard in temperament, health and cleanliness. As a result, it is very rare that we encounter any incidents in the Establishments that PAT Volunteer visit. However, it's important for all PAT Volunteers and staff to record all incidents, even if they appear minor. Please do this immediately and include as much detail as possible.

- In the event that it's needed, please use the Incident Report Form on page 36. You can also download one from our [website](#)
- Please keep a copy for yourself and send one to Head Office with any added comments. This is a safeguard for you, your PAT Pet and the Charity.

Feedback

Pets As Therapy welcomes feedback from its Volunteer and the Establishments we visit. If you or a member of the Establishment has any feedback to offer, please email reception@petsastherapy.org.

Publicity: Best practice and guidelines

Publicity is an extremely beneficial tool enabling us to further promote the good work of PAT Volunteers. Publicity widens our reach and appeal when recruiting new volunteers. It also alerts Establishments to the benefits of our service, encouraging them to register with us, giving our PAT Volunteers more places to visit and more people to help. Without good publicity, our charity would not be able to grow. The more supporters we attract, the more funding is available to expand. We really appreciate your help in promoting Pets As Therapy and hope that you enjoy the opportunity and your moment of fame — you deserve it!

Publicity means any published articles or photographs used in the public domain: magazines, newspapers, leaflets, web pages, social media and TV, or publicity on stands/stalls at events. It is our responsibility to check that all articles and photographs submitted for use are screened to ensure that they represent the Charity to the highest standard. Negative publicity can have a devastating effect, so all images must show PAT Volunteer and PAT Pets observing best practice surrounding publicity. We must be strict in our criteria of what classifies as a good representation, so we would ask you to follow our guidelines.

- All articles and photographs must be approved by Pets As Therapy Head Office before their use in any form of publicity. **No images can be used** until they have received our clearance.

- **The Charity name:** Always refer to the Charity as **Pets As Therapy** (please observe the capital **A**). When speaking about the Charity, Volunteer and staff, the term **Pets As Therapy** must be used as this is the registered charity name. However, you may refer to your visiting animal as a **PAT Dog** or **PAT Cat**.
- **Volunteer uniform:** If a **PAT Volunteer** wishes to appear in an image submitted for publicity, they should be wearing an item of **current** official **Pets As Therapy** uniform. No photographs can be accepted unless the **PAT Volunteer** is wearing this. The logo on the clothing must not be obscured. If you need to borrow a uniform for inclusion in publicity, contact **Head Office**. Photos displaying any old logo will not be accepted.
- **Dog/Cat uniform:** **PAT Pets** should be wearing an item of the **current** official **Pets As Therapy** uniform and always be on a lead, held by the **PAT Volunteer** at all times, even if the **Volunteer** is out of shot.
- Only one **PAT Pet** per registered **Volunteer** is allowed in a photograph.
- **The Photography Consent Form:** Always complete a **Photography Consent Form** (on page 32 and on our website) for each person included in the photograph, including yourself.
- Parents must sign on behalf of their child. If a school is signing on behalf of the pupil, then a signed letter must accompany the form on the school's headed paper giving the authority to sign on the student's behalf. If a client/patient is unable to sign the form, a relative or legal guardian can sign on their behalf.
- Once you have completed **Photography Consent Forms** from everyone included in the image(s), please forward the forms with the photo(s) to **Head Office**. Please cross-reference photographs and forms to enable us to identify them.
- Submitting a permission form(s) does not give clearance to use the image(s). If **Pets As Therapy** is happy for the image to be used, you will be notified of the official clearance. Photographs must accompany the consent forms plus information on where they are to be used.
- **The logo:** As a logo is a registered trademark, permission must be obtained before using it in any way. Contact **Head Office** with details of how our logo will be used and where it will appear.
- **Conduct:** A **PAT Volunteer** must never be photographed showing a dog accepting treats, pawing a person, licking or doing tricks. **PAT Volunteers** must never let anyone other than themselves hold the lead (unless two leads are attached, and the **Volunteer** is holding one of them).
- The **PAT Volunteer** must be shown holding his or her own **PAT Pet**, which must appear relaxed, comfortable and well-behaved.
- Photographs cannot be accepted if a **PAT Pet** appears stressed in any way, for example if it looks noticeably hot, aggressive or if a dog is straining at the leash or jumping up.

When taking any photos, remember:

- Always position your **PAT Pet** sideways proudly displaying their uniform.
- Ensure your **PAT Pet** is a healthy, happy animal with a clean, shiny coat and not overweight.
- Try and find an area that is light. Using flash can cause red-eye which can spoil your photograph.
- Aim for a background that is not busy, with as few people as possible as you will need to obtain each one's consent for their image to be used.
- Make sure that our **Pets As Therapy** logos are as clear and visible as possible.

Please note that we may not be able to give clearance due to factors involving the environment in which the photograph is taken, for example, if it shows content that is upsetting or distressing or contains embarrassing or compromising situations that would not be considered suitable for publicity.

Pets As Therapy has the discretion to permit or refuse any images submitted for publicity.

Handbook Declaration

I will not work with an Establishment unless I have a signed Establishment agreement and can confirm that this signed agreement has been returned to and received by the PAT Administration Team.

I have read the Pets As Therapy Handbook and understood the policy and procedures set out and will undertake to follow and abide by the contents.

Signed _____ Date _____
Name _____ I.D. no _____
Address _____

_____ Post code _____

Photography Consent Form

I consent to Pets As Therapy using photographs of myself, which may be taken during the time I am registered with Pets As Therapy. These would be used to help promote the beneficial work of the Charity and would potentially appear in:

- Newsletters, magazines, newspapers, websites, promotional literature, DVDs, etc.

I am aware that ALL publicity MUST be authorised in advance by a member of Pets As Therapy staff.

Signed _____ Date _____
Name _____ I.D. no _____

Please return to Head Office:

- fax to 01845 550236
- scan and email it to reception@petsastherapy.org
- or post to: Pets As Therapy, 59 Monument Business Park, Warpsgrove Lane, Chalgrove, Oxfordshire OX44 7RW

Welcome Acknowledgement Form (PAT 7)

Please complete and sign one form per PAT Volunteer, keep a copy for your records and return the original to Head Office.

As an Establishment, we shall be pleased to welcome visits from:

Volunteer Details				
Title:	First name:	Surname:		
Volunteer ID Number.		Address:		
Address:				
Town:		County:		
Postcode:		Name of Pet:		
Phone Number:		Email Address:		
Establishment Details				Block Capitals please
Establishment Name:			Title:	
Ward Name (if applicable):			Forename:	
Address:			Surname:	
Town:			Position of Authority:	
Postcode:			County:	
Phone number: Include area code			Email address.	
Hospital NHS	Hospital Private	Hospice		Residential Home Local Authority
Nursing Home Local Authority	Nursing Home Private	Special School	Needs	Residential Home Private
EMI unit	Secure Unit	Group Home		Main Stream School
Rehabilitation Unit	Stroke rehabilitation			Play / holiday club
Other - please specify				
READ2DOGS - Infants	READ2DOGS – Junior	READ 2 DOGS - Senior		READ 2 DOGS – Special Needs
Ages: Please specify	0 – 5 70	6-18 70+	19 – 30	31 – 45
			46 – 60	61 –
				Number of clients/students

Are any other pets onsite Y / N	Parking available for visitor? Y / N	Are staff present at all times? Y / N
Further Details: i.e abilities, DBS, training?		

Important note:

Please check the PAT Volunteer's ID annually to confirm that the volunteer remains registered with the Charity.

Establishment declaration

Aims and objectives of Pets As Therapy

The primary aim of Pets As Therapy (PAT) is to bring regular animal companionship and comfort to patients/residents in hospitals, hospices, day care centres, nursing homes and other Establishments by means of visits from PAT Volunteers and their registered temperament-tested PAT Pets.

Since Pets As Therapy started in 1983, over 26,000 PAT Dogs have been registered with us. Every year some of these retire and new PAT Pets, having first passed our assessment on health, temperament, suitability and stability grounds, join us to become a proud PAT Team, along with their owners of course.

Our PAT Volunteers are aware that you, as an Establishment accepting our service, may require further references, special police checks or occupational health interviews and they have declared that they will abide by your policies and procedures.

If you have not registered your Establishment, please do so before visits commence by visiting our website www.petsastherapy.org. Please note that if you have not registered your details you may not be covered by PAT insurance. Please make sure that you give the Pat Volunteer your Health and Safety procedures and any regulations that you might require them to follow.

PAT Volunteers agree to wear any security badges you require, as well as the Pets As Therapy photo ID and that of their PAT Pet. It is your guarantee that your visitor remains a registered Volunteer of Pets As Therapy and is bound by its policies. Pets As Therapy asks that you agree to ensure that your staff treat our Volunteer and their PAT Dog/Cat with respect and dignity during their visits to you. They are bound by our policies and procedures and should never be asked to contravene these by putting their PAT Pets or themselves at risk in any way.

Volunteers must be accompanied at all times by a member of staff and never left alone with a service user.

In the unlikely event that there is an incident where either one of our Volunteer or their Pet is involved, they are required by Pets As Therapy to notify Head Office. You should have received copy of the Establishment Guidelines and Volunteer Handbook. If you have not or would like another copy or you require any other information, please contact Head Office on 01865 671440.

We hope that you will receive many visits from our very special Pat Volunteer and their PAT Pet and that all your staff and patients/clients will feel the proven benefits of our service.

Please sign and date the form below to confirm your understanding and acceptance of the above.

	Establishment Details		Volunteer Details
Staff signature		Volunteer signature	
Name		Name	
Position		ID number	
Date		Date	

Please take a copy of this form to retain for your records, then email, post or fax the original to:

Pets As Therapy (Ref: PAT 7)

59 Monument BusinessPark
Warpsgrove Lane
Chalgrove
Oxfordshire OX44 7RW

Tel: 01865 671440
Fax: 01845 550236
Email: reception@petsastherapy.org
Web: www.petsastherapy.org

If you would like to help us further, you can make a donation to Pets As Therapy.

Here are four easy ways to for you to do this:

Make an electronic bank transfer to NatWest, account 70057605, sort code 53-61-55.

Call Head Office on 01865 671440 to make a secure card payment over the phone.

Pay via our secure payment system on our website <http://petsastherapy.org/donate/>.

Send a cheque, payable to Pets As Therapy, to Pets As Therapy, 59 Monument Business Park, Warpsgrove Lane, Chalgrove, Oxfordshire OX44 7RW

Many thanks.

PETS AS THERAPY

Incident Report Form

In the event that you and your PAT Dog or PAT Cat are involved in an incident, even if you consider it to be minor, Pets As Therapy require that a report should be completed and returned to Head Office as soon as possible.

Please describe the incident as fully as you can and include the time, date, and who else was present. Also note any action taken by the Establishment. This is for our records and without prejudice. Please describe the incident on reverse of the form. Please sign and date form.

Volunteer Details		
Title:	First name:	Surname:
I.D. Number.		Address:
Address:		
Town:	County:	
Postcode:	Name of :	
Email address	Phone Number:	

Establishment Details		Block Capitals please
Establishment Name:	Title:	
First Name:	Surname:	
Address:		
Town:	County:	
Postcode:	Position of Authority:	
Establishment Phone Number:	Date of Incident:	

Please give full details of the incident, and return to Pets As Therapy, 59 Monument Business Park, Warpsgrove Lane, Chalgrove, Oxfordshire, OX44 7RW.

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Volunteer's Signature:	Date:
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