

Child Protection and Safeguarding 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.