

**Risk Assessment - Therapy Dog Attendance**

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| Member of therapy Partners: | Location: where required |
| Date assessment: | Renewal: |

**Rationale:** *Therapy dog to accompany the therapist where appropriate. The presence of dogs in a therapy setting has been shown to lower anxiety levels, increase interactions and allow clients to achieve a state of relaxation.*

*Stroking a dog for 15 minutes has been scientifically proven to reduce blood pressure and increase the production of ‘feel good’ hormones like serotonin. A therapy dog offers comfort and friendship to maximise the benefits of therapy.*

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| (1) Hazard | (2) Risk | (3) Who might be harmed and how? | (4) What controls exist to reduce risk? | (5) What action can be taken to reduce risk? |
| Communicable disease | Medium | All involved  By contact with the dog, its saliva and or faeces | Dog to be fully vaccinated and on a regular de-flea/de-worming program  Dog to be monitored continuously for visible communicable infections such as ringworm.  Participants to be encouraged to wash their hands after touching the dog | Dog to be kept on a lead at all times  All contact will be monitored.  All waste to be disposed of promptly and correctly.  Dog to be cleaned and bathed appropriately to minimalize risks before the proposed therapy. |
| Allergies and cynophobia | Medium | clients to be monitored for possible allergies:  skin irritation, itchy eyes, breathing difficulties.  In any cases of cynophobia, exposure to dog to be managed closely.  Panic attacks. | Surveys to be carried out at the outset and at regular intervals to monitor effects of dog on clients  Any allergies or phobias to be monitored and recorded. | All to be vigilant for signs of symptoms.  Team to contact management if symptoms occur and the dog to be removed from the premises as soon as possible. |
| Harm to the dog | medium | All involved – distress  The dog:  Kicked, hit, tripped over, tail pulled, trodden on, | Dog to be kept on lead and contact monitored by handler.  Should the dog be harmed in any way, the session will cease and the dog removed. | Clients who try to harm the dog will not be allowed further contact.  Dog to have a retreat in the event of any disturbance to be arranged and communicated by clients. |
| Damage to property | Low | Property might be chewed  Wires could be damaged  Floor might get soiled | Dog supervised at all times.  In the event of soiling, the correct cleaning fluids to be used to sterilise and deodorize the area. | Dog supervised at all times and walked outside at every appropriate opportunity.  Sessions to be time boundaried. |
| Harm by the dog | medium | All- distress and panic.  Loud barking could disturb sound sensitive clients  Scratching if dog jumps up could tear skin and or clothing, causing minor wounds.  Canine therapy insurance is in place. | Supervision. Explain to clients about dog body language/warning signals.  Discourage client from putting their faces close to dog face.  Dog to be allowed to retreat as desired.    First aid applied to all wounds even if minor to prevent infection. | Contact supervised by handler at all times.  Dog to be on leash so handler can easily prevent dog jumping around when being walked.  Any incidents to be reviewed, recorded and learned from. |
| Dog Out of Control  Dog Jumping Up  Dog Mouthing  Dog Barking  Other fear/defensive actions | med | All– distress.  Disease, infection  Skin puncture wounds could require medical attention.  Emotional and physical distress. | Animal handling protocols to be followed at all times and dog supervised at all times.  Dog to be allowed to select who she/he approaches and to have a retreat place to return to in the case of overwhelm.  Deep puncture wounds will need to go to A and E. | Professional supervision at all times.  Clients to be given a demonstration of procedures to handle dog correctly.  The dog is used to handling, but keep dog away from faces and warn about the dangers of putting fingers near the dog’s mouth. |
| Cuts or injuries from walking/ other dog related activities | Low | Clients – distress, injury | Supervision of all involved both by the canine therapy team and other responsible adults. safety checks | Supervision by therapy team and other staff at all times |
| Harm to the therapy team | med | Therapy team | ~All appropriate safeguarding policies to be shared and team to be make aware of safeguarding lead | Therapy partners safeguarding policies to be observed. |
| Critical incident | High | All at site  Distress, injury  death | Therapy team to be made fully aware of emergency responses to terror.  Dog to accompany handler to designated meeting area away from the main building in the event of an incident | Update as necessary following any further attacks of terror. |

Signed: ARHEYES Date: 18th September 2023