

Ref: FOI/CAD/ID 3509

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Freedom of Information Act 2000

I am writing in response to your request for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in relation to Pet Therapy.

- 1) Has the Trust ever used any form of pet therapy or animal assisted therapy in your hospitals?*
- 2) If your Trust has used such services how have they been provided to the Trust i.e. Voluntary or funded by the Trust and has this remained the same or changed between voluntary and funded?*
- 3) What do you estimate the cost to be to the Trust of using animal assisted therapy by year for the last 5 years (if applicable?)*
- 4) Who is responsible within the Trust for organising Pet Therapy Services?*
- 5) What policies and procedures have been put in place as safeguards for using animals in hospitals?*
- 6) What qualifications / certifications does the Trust expect therapy animals to hold to guarantee patient safety?*

1) Currently we have a Chaplaincy Volunteer who has assistance of his hearing dog to aid him, with his role.
The Chaplaincy Volunteer has been recruited via the Trust recruiting process and the dog in accordance with the Policy & Procedure for the Management of animal visitors. The volunteer will attend low risk wards only as advised by infection control.

We currently do not have any therapy dogs visiting the Trust

2) All the attending therapy dogs are not funded by the Trust, and would attend on a voluntary basis, in accordance with the afore mentioned policy and volunteer recruiting process for the owner.

3) Provision is available for Volunteers to claim 45 pence per mile for visiting the Trust. Currently not applicable.

4) For future recruitment of Therapy dogs and owners this will fall under the responsibility of Voluntary Services.

5) Full recruiting process and pre-employment checks for the Volunteer owner.

Policy Policy & Procedure for the Management of animal visitors.

Contact with Infection Control.

All Therapy pets have to be registered with Pets as therapy. Org

It is appropriate for the PAT dog to visit low risks areas, ie Stroke unit, no surgical wards of Paediatric wards.

The Volunteer owner would have to adhere to all trust procedures and policies relevant to the clinical area, this would include infection control, occupational health DBS and pre-employment checks.

6) All Therapy pets have to be registered with Pets as therapy. Org

To register a pet the following needs to be carried out.

Completing the application form; providing two character references and a copy of the pet's vaccination certificate; having the dog or cat's temperament

- Dogs and cats must be a minimum age of 9 months and have been with their owner for at least 6 months before applying.

- All visiting pets must be fully vaccinated, wormed and protected against fleas. Records are required by the charity and each volunteer is requested to send copies when boosters have been administered.

Temperament Assessment

The dog or cat will need to be assessed by a local accredited Pets As Therapy Temperament Assessor as part of the application process. The assessment checks that the dog or cat is sociable and friendly that it is calm and gentle when being stroked or handled and that they aren't overly fearful of new and unexpected stimuli.

Dogs need to be able to:

- Walk on a relaxed lead, without excessive pulling and without the use of head collars, harnesses or check chains. Why? PAT dogs need to be under the owner's control at all times, without relying on the use of training or behaviour correction aids.

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

- Take a food treat gently without snatching from the assessor. Why? Patients and clients love to be able to give their PAT dog a food treat. It is important that they do not snatch it because some patients, such as older people have very fragile skin.

- Respond appropriately to a sudden noise or disturbance in the room whilst being tested. Why? PAT dogs have to encounter lots of new and

unexpected stimuli – they should not be overly fearful of this and recover quickly.

Owners need to be able to:

- Demonstrate control of their dog on the lead whilst holding a conversation with the assessor Why? Much of the volunteer's time is spent talking to different people and PAT dogs need to be able to wait patiently under the owner's control at all times.
- Groom their dog's back, chest, stomach and tail. Why? If a dog readily accepts grooming by its owner, it demonstrates that the owner has control over their dog's behaviour and the dog is willing to accept their authority.
- Demonstrate that they can restrict their dog by holding its collar or holding him/her firmly. Why? PAT dogs need to be able to accept restraint from their owners in case of an emergency in the establishment or if the owner needs to withdraw their dog quickly from a patient or client.
- Present their dog in a fit, clean and healthy condition. Why? Fit, healthy dogs behave appropriately as PAT dogs under demanding social and physical situations. A well-groomed and clean dog is a sign of a responsible pet owner. Assessors are also asked to make note of any other behaviours that they may observe throughout the assessment, for example: jumping up, pawing, or excessive licking. Such behaviours are not acceptable on Pets As Therapy visits.