

**ANIMAL WELFARE POLICIES AND
PROCEDURES HANDBOOK
2021-22**



CONTENTS

1. Standard Operating Procedure: Animal Welfare Record-Keeping - *page 3*
2. Animal Welfare Training Policy - *page 6*
3. Standard Operating Procedure: Hygiene And Cleaning - *page 8*
4. Animal Welfare During Transport Policy - *page 16*
5. Standards Of Environment Policy - *page 20*
6. Standards Of Diet And Nutrition Policy - *page 32*
7. Therapy Dog Policy - *page 37*
8. Animal Handling, Interactions and Socialisation Policy and Procedures -
page 43
9. Standard Operating Procedure: Death Or Escape Of An Animal - *page 50*
10. Medication Policy - *page 52*
11. Standard Operating Procedure: Health Checks - *page 54*
12. Standard Operating Procedure: Newly Adopted and Sick/Injured Animals -
page 59
13. Fire Escape Procedure - Droylsden Base - *page 62*
14. Animal Welfare In The Event of Owner's Death Policy - *page 63*
15. Standard Operating Procedure: Animals At Outreach Sessions - *page 64*

Standard Operating Procedures: Animal welfare record-keeping

Date reviewed: 1st June 2021

Introduction

The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 require that Noah's A.R.T., as licence holders, must ensure that at any time all the records we are required to keep as a condition of the licence are available for inspection by an inspector in a visible and legible form.

This document outlines our standard operating procedure for recording, storing, maintaining and retaining animal welfare records.

This document also sets out how Noah's ART monitors, records and responds to behaviour and health-related changes and issues in its animals. The purpose of these procedures is to ensure the health and wellbeing of all of our animals at all times.

List of records kept by Noah's A.R.T.

- A list of the number and types of animals kept and used for therapy work (as specified on our licence)
- A database detailing each animal kept for therapy work with all the information necessary to identify that animal individually, plus their health check records
 - Name of supplier of the animal (e.g. rescue centre, breeder)
 - Date of birth
 - Date of arrival at Noah's ART
 - Name
 - Sex
 - Neuter status
 - Description
 - Microchip number (if applicable)
 - Insurance details (if applicable)
 - Details of the animal's medical and behavioural history, including details of any treatment administered against parasites and any restrictions on exercise or diet
 - Record of the dates of the animal's vaccination, worming and flea treatments
 - Most recent weight
 - Current medical conditions
 - Date of most recent health check
 - Date of most recent Ivermectin treatment
 - Date of most recent bathing
 - Weekly progress notes

- Any other pertinent information
- Individual profiles for each animal used for therapy work
- Animal work rota
- Staff training record
- Cage cleaning record
- Medications inventory
- Medication administration record (MAR) sheets
- Record of deceased animals
- Individual health check recording forms for every health check carried out
- Food and water intake charts (for use with sick animals)

Recording

Noah's ART maintains a master database of all animal health records. This details information including name, DOB, chronic health issues, weight changes, grooming records, health check records, behavioural observations, treatment records and weekly progress notes, as listed above. Noah's ART also maintains a deceased list, detailing causes of death if known.

- The lead animal welfare volunteer and/or staff members will update this database after every individual animal health check.
- This database is accessible to relevant staff and volunteers via the shared Google Drive, and is available for inspection by authorised inspectors at any time.

Prioritisation for health checks

The master database is ordered by date of most recent health checks, in addition to other factors such as age and need for follow-up treatments.

- The staff member responsible for producing the weekly animal rota will check the database each week. This will inform which animals they rota to be health-checked/treated that week.
- In addition, the responsible staff member will maintain a prioritisation whiteboard at The Together Centre. This is informed by communications from staff and volunteers following regular observation of behaviour during sessions and at the Droyslden base.

Please see - 'SOP: Health Checks' for full details of the health checking procedure

Documentation

Blank health check forms for each species will be kept on the shared Google Drive and as physical copies at The Together Centre.

- A new health check form should be completed by the staff member or volunteer carrying out the health check, whilst undertaking the check or immediately after
- Health checks should also be amended on the master database when completed
- Completed health check forms will be stored securely at The Together Centre for a period of at least 3 years.

- If an animal becomes unwell or undergoes veterinary treatment, a qualified staff member will create a care plan document, which is accessible to all involved in the care of the animal via the shared Google Drive.
- All animal welfare volunteers are encouraged to take an active role in completing paperwork, under the supervision of the lead animal welfare volunteer and/or the responsible staff member.

Inventory

- All animal medications must be stored securely in the locked cabinet at The Together Centre or at the Droylsden base.
- A minimum requirements list must be maintained by the responsible staff member.

Stock-taking and ordering procedure

1. The lead animal welfare volunteer and responsible staff member will undertake a monthly animal welfare stock audit.
2. The staff member will record and send a list of required items to the Noah's ART director to order each month.
3. Should a volunteer or staff member run out or notice low supplies of any items day-to-day, they should note this on the shopping list pinned up in the clinic room. The responsible staff will then inform the Noah's ART director if any item is urgently required.

Retention

Records are stored in electronic or paper format for at least three years beginning with the date on which the record was created.

A record audit is undertaken by Noah's ART staff at least every three years, at which point old records are archived or securely destroyed.

These procedures are subject to regular review.

Animal Welfare Training Policy

Date reviewed: 1st June 2021

Purpose of policy

All staff and volunteers working with the animals should have a good understanding of the needs of Noah's ART animals. This is to prevent any injury to animals or people including clients of the service.

Staff qualifications

Staff employed to specifically support animal welfare must have a recognised animal welfare qualification (at Level 3 or above) and some experience in animal care.

Qualified staff must work with Noah's ART to ensure all documentation is kept up to date and suggestions for improvement are passed through the correct channels e.g. via email to admin@noahs-art.co.uk for team review.

Therapy staff, who are not specifically employed for the purpose of animal welfare but whose duties include caring for and maintaining the welfare of the animals, will be supported to achieve qualifications in animal care.

Noah's ART will aim to employ at least 60% of salaried staff with a relevant animal care qualification.

In-house training

Noah's ART will provide in-house animal welfare training for all staff and volunteers covering:

- Animal welfare and the law
- Performing animal license requirements
- Five welfare needs
- Supporting a rescue
- Training animals for therapy
- Dog training in therapy (basics)
- Supporting animals during therapy work
- Noah's ART procedures for documenting animal welfare records

Therapy staff and volunteers will also be encouraged to attend our in-house training course in Animal Assisted Interventions.

As appropriate, staff and volunteers will be encouraged to attend further training and conferences relating to animal welfare e.g. pet first aid courses

Refer to the commercial training course, 'Introduction to AAI', for training materials and full content.

Standard Operating Procedure: Animal Welfare - Hygiene and Cleaning

Date reviewed: 14th June 2021

Introduction

Good hygiene procedures are critical in preventing the spread of disease and infection amongst animals. This is particularly important when housing a large number of animals. Animal assisted therapy often involves people vulnerable to illness, such as children and the elderly. We aim to minimise the risks to all clients, staff and volunteers who engage with the animals at Noah's ART.

This document outlines our hygiene procedures and cleaning regimes. This document also details our waste disposal procedure. Hygiene procedures for ill and new animals can be found in *Standard Operating Procedure: New and Sick Animals*.

1. Hygiene Procedures

1a) Hygiene during Animal Assisted Therapy work

- We disinfect animal carriers used to transport animals to and from sessions between uses, using an animal-safe disinfectant.

Carrier cleaning regime:

- Take towels/pads out and launder them with disinfectant
 - Take out any debris such as droppings or food
 - Spray and wipe down with disinfectant
 - Allow to dry
 - Place back in storage area
- During handling by clients, we wrap guinea pigs and rats in towels, preventing clients from coming into contact with any droppings or urine. A new, clean towel is used for each animal and client.
 - Rabbits are not handled by clients. They are either on covered tables or in pens, which are spot cleaned throughout the session.
 - When mice are handled, the client is given a towel to cover their clothes.
 - All towels and blankets are laundered and disinfected after a session.
 - Perishable items such as hay toys and leftover vegetables are disposed of after each session.
 - Toys, hides and other equipment are cleaned between sessions using an animal-safe disinfectant.

- All staff, volunteers and clients taking part in a session are encouraged to follow good hand hygiene practices, through verbal reminders and signage. Staff, volunteers and clients are encouraged to wash their hands after handling each animal. Hand sanitiser and hand washing facilities are readily available at The Together Centre base.
- Noah's ART will always adhere to any additional hygiene procedures of external venues visited, such as hospitals and care homes.
- Noah's ART currently has two resident lizards. Reptiles are not currently used in outreach sessions. They are however, used in therapy work at The Together Centre. Reptiles may carry salmonella, and handling them carries risks. Anyone handling them will be made aware of the risk of salmonella, and the need for good hand hygiene following handling them. Clients do not come into contact with any reptile enclosures, which is often where salmonella is contracted from. Staff and volunteers involved in cleaning reptile enclosures are aware of how to appropriately manage this risk, (see cleaning procedure below for reptiles).

1b) Hygiene During Animal Care

- Anyone carrying out animal care tasks are encouraged to follow good hand hygiene practices.
- Appropriate hygiene practices are covered in our in-house animal welfare training for all volunteers and staff.
- Volunteers and clients taking part in animal care tasks must be supervised by experienced staff/volunteers.
- Where appropriate, PPE such as disposable gloves is used.
- Only high quality, veterinary grade disinfectant is used.
- Grooming equipment is disinfected between animals and uses. This includes, brushes, scissors and nail clippers.

2. Cleaning Procedures

2a) Recording

See also: 'Standard Operating Procedures: Animal Welfare Record-Keeping'

- A cage cleaning record sheet is maintained for permanent animal enclosures, which details:
 - cage cleaned
 - who carried out the cleaning
 - date of last clean

Please see '*Appendix A - cage cleaning record template*'

- Cages cleaned by new volunteers are checked to ensure they are adequately clean, before being signed off on.

2b) Cleaning regime: toys, hides and other equipment

1. Brush off debris
2. Leave to soak in bucket of diluted disinfectant for at least ten minutes
3. Take out of bucket and leave to dry
4. Empty bucket

2c) Cleaning regime: grooming equipment

1. Remove all excess hair from equipment, using a brush where necessary
2. For electric clippers, use a brush to remove excess hair, wipe down with disinfectant, remove top blade to disinfect between blades
3. For scissors, brushes, combs, nail clippers, wash in hot water with antibacterial detergent, and rinse
4. Once clean, leave equipment to soak in disinfectant for 10-20 minutes, then remove and dry
5. Ensure all equipment is completely dry before putting away
6. Dispose of loose hair left on surfaces, and clean down with disinfectant
7. Sweep any hair on the floor and either spray and wipe or mop with disinfectant

2d) Droylsden base cleaning

The Droylsden base is the permanent home for the majority of Noah's ART's animals. No therapy work is carried out here.

- At the Droylsden base, animal enclosures are deep cleaned and disinfected once a week.

- Spot cleaning is carried out twice/week at a minimum.
- The exception to this is the reptile enclosure, which is deep cleaned once every three months and spot cleaning when necessary.
- Sheds used to store bedding, straw and hay are regularly cleaned. They are secured to protect the supplies from pests such as wild rats and mice.
- Cleaning equipment, such as brooms, dustpans and brushes, are cleaned and disinfected weekly following deep cleaning of cages.
- Cleaning is recorded using the cage-cleaning record sheet.

2e) The Together Centre cleaning

Animal enclosures at The Together Centre base are used daily for temporarily housing animals involved in that days' therapy sessions or animal health checks, and are not the permanent home of the animals. The exception to this are the fish and stick insects, which have permanent homes at the Centre.

TTC rabbit and guinea pig hutches/enclosures

- Hutches and enclosures are fully cleaned after each days' use

Daily cleaning regime:

1. Remove animals into outside exercise areas
2. Empty dirty bedding into bin bag
3. Spray litter trays with disinfectant and dry
4. Clean food bowls and water bottles, and refill
5. Clean any toys such as tunnels
6. Sweep outside pens
7. Refill hutch with clean paper bedding straw and give fresh hay
8. Dispose of bags of dirty bedding
9. Allow animals back into the hutch if appropriate
10. Wash hands thoroughly

- Spot cleaning is carried out throughout the days as needed

Spot cleaning regime:

1. Empty litter trays
2. Sweep outside areas
3. Clean food bowls

4. Clean water bottles
5. Remove uneaten fresh food or wet hay

Mouse and rat cages at TTC

- The mouse cages are deep cleaned twice per week and spot cleaned as necessary
- The rat cages are deep cleaned after each day's use and spot cleaned as necessary

Deep cleaning regime:

1. Remove animals from cage
2. Empty dirty bedding into bin bag
3. Remove any old food or dropping on areas not covered by bedding
4. If plastic platforms or toys are soiled, remove them and clean in warm water with detergent and disinfectant
5. Wipe down the bars of the cage with anigene
6. Check floor for bedding or food, sweep if needed.
7. Clean food bowls and water bottles, and refill
8. Dispose of bags of dirty bedding in outside bin
9. Fill with new bedding
10. Once dry, put back platforms and toys
11. Put animals back into cage
12. Wash hands thoroughly
13. Record on cleaning record sheet

Spot cleaning regime:

1. Remove soiled areas of bedding
2. Remove any uneaten fresh food
3. Clean food bowls
4. Clean water bowls
5. Clean any soiled toys such as tunnels or tubes
6. Record on cleaning sheet

Reptile vivariums at TTC

- Spot cleaning is done when needed.
- Deep cleaning is done every 3 months.

Deep cleaning regime:

1. Take animal out of vivarium
2. Turn all electrical equipment off
3. Empty out substrate (sand or coconut fibre)
4. Sand substrate can be sifted to remove old food and debris, or if soiled, sand must be replaced.
5. Coconut bedding such as EcoEarth, cannot be reused and must be disposed of
6. Remove hides, food bowl, and decorations, clean where necessary with warm water and detergent
7. Spray and wipe down terrarium with disinfectant
8. Allow everything to dry
9. Replace bedding
10. Put hides etc back
11. Turn electrical equipment back on
12. Check temperatures before placing animal back into terrarium
13. Record on cleaning sheet

Spot cleaning regime:

1. Remove uneaten food
2. Sift sand for debris
3. Clean food and water bowls
4. Clean hides, toys, decorations
5. Record on cleaning sheet

Fish tanks at TTC

- Staff and volunteers adhere to the following procedure for cleaning aquariums:
 1. Test the water with testing strips
 2. Clean the inside of the tank -
 - Scrape off any algae from the sides with the magnetic scraper
 - Siphon the gravel to remove debris and uneaten food
 3. Change the water (there is no need to remove the fish) -
 - Siphoning the gravel removes the water. Do not remove more than 30% of the tank water. Retain the removed tank water.
 - Replace with treated tap water, ensuring the temperature is the same as the tank water
 4. Remove filter foam, polycarbon cartridges and bio max biological media, and clean in the removed tank water. Never clean with tap water.
 5. Remove and clean the filter impeller
 6. Clean the outside of the tank, using a damp cloth

7. Replenish lost bacteria by adding half a cap of biological supplement
 8. Record cleaning on the aquarium maintenance checklist document
- In addition, every 6 months we:
 - Replace one filter foam and add a drop of Bio Cycle
 - Replace half the biological media and add Bio Cycle

Stick insect enclosure at TTC

- The stick insect enclosure is cleaned weekly.

Stick insect cleaning regime:

1. Remove all the foliage, taking care to inspect each leaf/branch for stick insects
2. Remove all the stick insects and place them in the small secure net cage
3. Sweep out the floor of the enclosure
4. Empty and change the water container
5. Place new foliage in the enclosure
6. Gently return the stick insects to the enclosure

Waste disposal procedures

Waste arising from cleaning out temporary animal enclosures at The Together Centre, such as animal bedding, is of a minimal quantity, and as such is disposed of in the centre's landfill bins for collection by Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council trade refuse service.

Waste arising from cleaning at the Droylsden base is stored securely in sealed, orange bins, then collected by Fresh Start Waste Collection.

Animal Welfare During Transport Policy

Date reviewed: 7th April 2021

Introduction

The transport, loading and unloading of animals may be stressful to animals. *The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018* (DEFRA) states that animals must be transported and handled in a manner (including for example in relation to housing, temperature, ventilation and frequency) that protects them from pain, suffering, injury and disease. Likewise, the welfare of animals during transportation is protected by EU legislation (*Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005*), which applies to the transport of all live vertebrate animals for the purposes of economic activity. This policy lays out ways in which Noah's A.R.T. will minimise stress and prevent suffering of animals during transportation.

Fitness to travel

All animals will be checked before loading to ensure they are healthy enough to tolerate the entire journey ahead (including loading, unloading and any journey breaks) with no or very little adverse effect on them.

Unhealthy, injured, heavily pregnant, or very young animals will not be transported, unless they are being transported for veterinary treatment or under the instruction of a vet. In this case, unhealthy animals will be transported in isolation where possible. If not possible, then they will not be transported in the same carrier as healthy animals. The carrier and vehicle will be cleaned and disinfected immediately after transportation.

Animals will be checked immediately after unloading for signs of injury, illness and distress, and appropriate action taken if needed.

Journey time

The maximum journey time to sessions is one hour, and journey times will be kept to a minimum. Requests for sessions more than one hour away from the base will be declined.

Means of transport

Animals will not be left unattended in vehicles at any time.

Vehicles used for transporting animals will be cleaned and disinfected regularly to maintain a hygienic environment and prevent/control the spread of disease, and always after the transportation of an unhealthy animal.

All animals will be transported in safe, clean, secure travel carriers appropriate to their species. All travel cages are cleaned and disinfected after every journey. **Please see SOP: Hygiene and Cleaning.**

Rabbits, guinea pigs, and other small mammals

Animals will be provided with access to food and water immediately prior to and after the journey. Animals will be caged in their bonded groups or pairs where appropriate, and different species will never be caged together.

Dogs

Dogs will be securely restrained at all times during transportation. Access to food, water and opportunity to toilet will be provided immediately before and after journeys.

Reptiles

Transport of cold-blooded reptiles will be kept to a minimum. When transport is unavoidable, cold-blooded reptiles will be transported in suitable, secure travel carriers, with a securely-wrapped heat pack. Temperature inside the carrier will be monitored by a thermometer and addition of heat packs adjusted according to the weather conditions and temperature inside the vehicle.

Staff training

All staff involved in transporting animals will be trained on-the-job on identifying animals' fitness for travel, safe loading, unloading and handling, journey time limitations, and welfare during transportation.

All drivers will receive instructions on vehicle breakdown and accident contingency plans.

Extreme temperature procedures

Potential weather conditions will be factored into journey plans. In addition, all staff are trained in animal first aid, including how to recognise heat/cold stress and how to respond.

Very hot weather

Animals will not be transported when the weather is unusually hot.

In generally hot weather, animals will only be transported in vehicles with a working air conditioning system in use. Temperature inside the vehicle will be monitored with a thermometer and/or vehicle's own temperature gauge.

All staff must carry towels and water in their vehicles. If staff identify that animals are struggling in transit due to very hot weather, they will place a damp towel over them or over the cage, monitor the animals, take them to safety as soon as possible, and solicit veterinary care if appropriate.

Loading and unloading times will be kept to a minimum.

Animal travel carriers will only be stored in well-ventilated areas of the vehicle. Travel carriers will be spaced apart adequately to allow ventilation.

Water bottles will be attached to the travel carriers.

Very cold weather

Animals will only be transported in vehicles with a working heating system in use. Temperature inside the vehicle will be monitored with a thermometer and/or vehicle's own temperature gauge.

Staff must always carry blankets and towels in the car to add extra insulation to cages and /or animals if necessary.

Loading and unloading times will be kept to a minimum.

Contingency measures

All drivers are provided with an emergencies handbook, a copy of which must be kept in their cars. This handbook details the following procedures:

Vehicle breakdown

All vehicles used for transporting animals must have breakdown cover.

In the event of a vehicle breakdown whilst transporting animals, drivers are to contact another Noah's A.R.T. staff member who is able to travel to the breakdown site and transfer the animals to their vehicle.

Accidents

All drivers must carry an accident book in their vehicle and follow the procedures for managing accidents involving the animals in transit:

1. All staff involved in transporting animals must be trained in animal first aid.
2. Drivers must carry with them contact details for emergency veterinary care. In the event of an accident involving the animals, drivers must seek immediate and suitable emergency veterinary care.
3. Once veterinary care has been arranged, drivers must contact Noah's ART director Sharon Hall.

Standards of environment policy

Date reviewed: 1st June 2021

Introduction

The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 (DEFRA) state that animals must be kept at all times in an environment suitable to their species and condition (including health status and age). It is important to the physical health and mental wellbeing of all the animals kept by Noah's ART that they are provided with an appropriate habitat.

These notes outline how Noah's A.R.T. should manage and tailor the environments of its animals to best suit their needs, according to species, health status, and age.

Animals residing at the Droylsden base

The majority of Noah's ART animals live permanently at the home base in Droylsden.

1. Rabbits and guinea pigs

We will provide housing which allows the rabbits and guinea pigs to express their natural behaviours. The guinea pigs are housed inside a dedicated 10x8ft shed, whilst most of the rabbits are housed in outdoor hutches. We use a video camera system to monitor the enclosures remotely during periods where nobody is at home.

1a) Behavioural adaptations

Rabbits and guinea pigs are highly social. They will be housed in bonded pairs or social groups of the same species wherever possible. Where rabbits become single for any reason, we will endeavour to safely bond them with others of their species where possible. Staff will be trained to monitor and identify group disruption.

We will provide our rabbits and guinea pigs with safe toys to chew and play with.

Each enclosure will include access to secure spaces for animals to hide in if they feel scared.

1b) Space

All of our rabbit hutches must be at least 6X2 ft large, and big enough to enable the animals to lie fully stretched out, stand in their natural posture, move around freely, rest comfortably, and hide or move away from humans or other animals in the enclosure. All enclosures have separate areas available for sleeping, toileting and exercising. Where animals are kept in larger social groups, we will increase the enclosure size accordingly. Similarly, shared enclosures will contain sufficient resources (food, water, enrichment items etc.) for each individual animal to minimise dominance, and where this is identified, additional resources will be provided.

Where possible, animals will also have access to a secure run area attached to their hutches, on hard-standing/concrete patio.

We provide at least a 5ft habitat within the shed area with rotated access to outside spaces. Outside spaces need to be monitored to ensure safety from predators.

1c) Security and state of repair

We will ensure that all enclosures are predator-proof, escape-proof, lockable, dry and weather-proof. We will carry out daily inspections of all enclosures to identify damage, damp, weaknesses, hazards and wear, and carry out repairs as soon as possible. Outside hutches have waterproof roofs and are raised off the ground.

1d) Ventilation and temperature

All hutches are raised off the floor to allow air circulation. Hutches are well-ventilated, but positioned away from draughts and sheltered from extremes of weather, i.e. positioned in sheltered areas of the garden, inside the shed, or indoors.

Temperature inside hutches is monitored via thermometers. In the event of extreme cold or heat, animals are moved either inside the house or to the Together Centre to temporary indoor accommodation. In very cold weather, we keep the heating on low at the Together Centre overnight and adjust the heating accordingly throughout the day, adding space heaters if necessary. In very hot weather, we use fans and a portable air conditioning unit.

1e) Cleanliness

The animals are provided with adequate amounts of white bedding and hay. We undertake daily spot-cleans of all enclosures, and once-weekly full cleans consisting of removing and replacing all soiled bedding and hay. Animals with runs outside will have the area swept daily to prevent buildup of animal waste. The patio areas will be disinfected, and power jet will be used weekly.

Please see **SOP: Hygiene and Cleaning** for full details of our cleaning procedures.

1f) Light levels

Most hutches/enclosures are positioned outdoors and so benefit from natural light. For animals housed inside the shed, there is a large window and the shed door is kept open during daylight hours when somebody is present at home. The shed also has electricity and heating. All hutches have covered/enclosed areas where animals can move away from the light.

2. Rats

We will provide housing which is safe, clean, secure and which allows our rats to express their natural behaviours.

2a) Behavioural adaptations

Rats are social animals. Our rats are kept in same-sex social groups and we will endeavour to safely bond single rats with a pair/larger group wherever possible.

The rats are provided with safe cage enrichment toys to play with, such as hammocks and ladders. The rat cages must have multiple levels/platforms.

2b) Space

The rats are housed in large, wire cages, which allow the animals space to run around, climb and explore. Size of accommodation for rats living in larger social groups is increased accordingly. Similarly, shared enclosures will contain sufficient resources (food, water, enrichment items etc.) for each individual animal to minimise dominance, and where this is identified, additional resources will be provided.

All cages include spaces to hide, and room for separate toileting, sleeping and feeding areas.

Rats are provided with dust-free bedding and nesting material, identified as safe for rats.

2c) Security and state of repair

Rats are only housed in cages where the bars are small enough that they can't squeeze through.

We will ensure that all cages are predator-proof, escape-proof, and lockable. We will carry out daily inspections of all enclosures to identify damage, weaknesses, hazards and wear, and carry out repairs as soon as possible.

2d) Ventilation, humidity and temperature

Rats will always be housed indoors. Cages are positioned away from draughts and away from direct exposure to heat, in well-ventilated, dry areas of the house or The Together Centre.

The cages are well-ventilated and allow air to circulate.

Temperature indoors is monitored via thermometers and home thermostat to avoid exposure to extremes of heat/cold. In the event of extreme cold or heat, ambient temperature is adjusted using central heating, fans, or space heaters. In cold weather we keep the heating on low at the Together Centre overnight, and adjust the heating accordingly throughout the day. In very hot weather, we use fans and a portable air conditioning unit.

2e) Cleanliness

Rat cages are spot-cleaned at least daily, and fully cleaned every 2-3 days. Urine, faeces and old food are removed, surfaces cleansed using anigene disinfectant, and bedding material replaced.

2d) Light and noise levels

Rat cages are positioned away from direct sunlight. As rats tend to be crepuscular and are very sensitive to light, the cages are sited where they benefit from natural light and darkness cycles.

The cages are kept away from high pitched sounds, ultrasound, long term and unpredictable sudden bursts of noise, as extreme noise can be stressful to rats.

3. Bearded dragon

We will provide housing which allows Merlin to express his natural behaviours and which reflects the natural habitat of bearded dragons.

3a) Behavioural adaptations

Bearded dragons are solitary animals, so we will never house more than one animal in the same vivarium.

Merlin's vivariums at home and at the Together Centre contain items such as logs, hammocks and bridges to facilitate climbing short distances. We will ensure that the habitats also always include in other appropriate enrichment items including large hides, foraging toys, and artificial plants.

We provide a reptile-safe sand substrate such as Beardie Life to facilitate natural digging behaviours.

3b) Space

Both of Merlin's vivariums are above the minimum size of 120X60cm large, to allow a full thermogradient and enough space for him to move around, climb, hunt and forage.

3b) Security and state of repair

We will ensure that both vivariums are escape-proof, secure, solidly-made, and free from hazards. We will carry out daily inspections of all enclosures to identify damage, weaknesses, hazards and wear, and carry out repairs as soon as possible.

The electrical heating equipment, including heat lamps and thermostats, will be regularly checked for electrical safety, and repaired or replaced accordingly. Repairs will only be carried out by a qualified electrician, and any malfunctioning equipment will be removed immediately.

3c) Ventilation, humidity and temperature

A heat- and light-emitting bulb is installed at one end of Merlin's habitats. Temperature is maintained at 38-40C in the basking area, for 10-12 hours each day, by a thermostat. A thermogradient is maintained by leaving the other end of the vivarium unheated and kept at 20-22C, monitored via thermometer. At night the heat source is switched off to mimic natural night time conditions.

Humidity is monitored via a hygrometer positioned at the cool side of the vivarium.

Merlin's habitats are well-ventilated via large vents at the rear of the vivariums, in addition to sliding glass doors.

3d) Cleanliness

Waste is spot-cleaned immediately or as soon as possible. The substrate is removed and replaced at least monthly.

3e) Light and noise levels

Merlin's vivariums are lit by UVB tube lights during the daytime. The vivarium is on a timer switch which goes off over night

4. Fat-tailed gecko

We will provide housing which allows Velvet to express her natural behaviours and which reflects the natural habitat of fat-tailed geckos.

4a) Behavioural adaptations

Currently we have one female gecko housed singularly. We will never house multiple male geckos together, to avoid aggression. We will never house geckos of different species together.

We will ensure that the vivarium contains hiding places to allow sleeping during the day, including hides in both the warm and cool areas of the habitat. We will also ensure that the habitat also always provides other enrichment items to reflect fat-tailed geckos' natural behaviours, including artificial foliage.

As fat-tailed geckos naturally live in dry regions with areas of humidity, we will always use a suitable substrate that can absorb moisture.

4b) Space

We will always house geckos in vivariums of a minimum size of 60cm X 40cm X 30cm, to allow enough space to hide and sleep securely, and hunt.

4c) Security and state of repair

We will ensure that the vivarium is escape-proof, secure, solidly-made, and free from hazards. We will carry out daily inspections of all enclosures to identify damage, weaknesses, hazards and wear, and carry out repairs as soon as possible.

The electrical heating equipment, including heat lamps and thermostats, will be regularly checked for electrical safety, and repaired or replaced accordingly. Repairs will only be carried out by a qualified electrician, and any malfunctioning equipment will be removed immediately.

4d) Ventilation, humidity and temperature

A heat-emitting bulb is installed at one end of Velvet's habitat. Temperature in the warm spot is maintained at 30-32C by a thermostat. A thermogradient is maintained by leaving the other end of the vivarium unheated and kept at around 26C or below, monitored via thermometer.

At the cool end of the vivarium, we provide a humid hide to allow the gecko to seek out an area of higher humidity if required. We maintain the humidity of this hide by placing sphagnum moss underneath, which is checked for dampness daily.

The vivarium is kept well-ventilated via large vents at the rear, in addition to sliding glass doors.

4e) Cleanliness

Waste is spot-cleaned immediately or as soon as possible. The substrate is removed and replaced at least monthly.

4f) Light and noise levels

The vivarium is lit by UVB tube light, regulated by an automatic timer. The light switches off at nighttime, to mimic natural conditions and support fat-tailed geckos' nocturnal sleep/wake cycle.

Animal enclosures at The Together Centre base

Animals being used in therapy work or undergoing health checks are temporarily housed at the Together Centre Base. Only the stick insects, mice and fish reside permanently at The Together Centre. Please see **SOP: Hygiene and Cleaning** for full details of environment cleaning procedures at TTC.

1. *Indian Stick Insects*

1a) Space

Our stick insects are housed in a tall, wire mesh-sided insect cage, to allow them space to hang vertically and shed their skins.

1b) Security and state of repair

We will ensure that the cage is predator-proof and escape-proof. We will carry out daily inspection to identify damage, weaknesses, hazards and wear, and carry out repairs as soon as possible.

1c) Ventilation, humidity and temperature

Moderate humidity levels are maintained by spraying the enclosure with water 2-3 times per week. The enclosure is positioned away from exposure to draughts and extremes of temperature.

The stick insects are always kept indoors. Temperature indoors is monitored via thermometers and home thermostat to avoid exposure to extremes of heat/cold. In the event of extreme cold or heat, ambient temperature is adjusted using central heating, fans, or space heaters. In cold weather we keep the heating on low at the Together Centre overnight, and adjust the heating accordingly throughout the day. In very hot weather, we use fans and a portable air conditioning unit.

1d) Cleanliness

The enclosure is cleaned weekly. All foliage is removed and replaced, and the floor of the cage thoroughly swept and wiped down.

2. *Fish*

There are two fish tanks at The Together Centre. The environment of both are maintained by adherence to the following procedure:

- Test the water with testing strips
- Clean the inside of the tank -
- Scrape off any algae from the sides with the magnetic scraper
- Siphon the gravel to remove debris and uneaten food
- Change the water (there is no need to remove the fish) -

- Siphoning the gravel removes the water. Do not remove more than 30% of the tank water. Retain the removed tank water.
- Replace with treated tap water, ensuring the temperature is the same as the tank water
- Remove filter foam, polycarbon cartridges and bio max biological media, and clean in the removed tank water. Never clean with tap water.
- Remove and clean the filter impeller
- Clean the outside of the tank, using a damp cloth
- Replenish lost bacteria by adding half a cap of biological supplement
- Record cleaning on the aquarium maintenance checklist document

In addition, every 6 months we:

- Replace one filter foam and add a drop of Bio Cycle
- Replace half the biological media and add Bio Cycle

3. *Mice*

We will provide housing which is safe, clean, secure and which allows our mice to express their natural behaviours.

3a) Behavioural adaptations

Mice are social animals with complex social organisation within their groups. Our mice are kept in same-sex social groups. We endeavour to minimise disturbance between groups, but will cautiously bond single mice with a pair/larger group wherever possible. Where not possible, we will ensure that single mice are housed where they can hear and smell other mice of their sex. Cages containing male mouse groups will be sited out of sight, smell and sound of female groups, to prevent aggression.

Our mice are always provided with safe cage enrichment items, including solid-structure running wheels, shelving/platforms, climbing toys, and cardboard tubes.

Dust-free deep bedding material is always provided, to facilitate burrowing behaviour. Our mice are always provided with boxes for hiding if scared, and dust-free material and nest-boxes for nesting.

3b) Space

The mice are housed in large, wire cages, with narrow spacing between bars. Size of accommodation for mice living in larger social groups is increased accordingly. Similarly,

shared enclosures will contain sufficient resources (food, water, enrichment items etc.) for each individual animal to minimise dominance, and where this is identified, additional resources will be provided.

All cages have enough room to nest, hide, and to allow separate toileting, sleeping and feeding areas.

3c) Security and state of repair

Mice are only housed in cages where the bars are narrowly-spaced enough that they can't squeeze through.

We will ensure that all cages are predator-proof, escape-proof, and lockable. We will carry out daily inspections of all enclosures to identify damage, weaknesses, hazards and wear, and carry out repairs as soon as possible.

3d) Ventilation, humidity and temperature

Mice will always be housed indoors. Cages are positioned away from draughts and away from direct exposure to heat, in well-ventilated, dry areas of the house or The Together Centre.

The cages are well-ventilated and allow air to circulate.

Temperature indoors is monitored via thermometers and home thermostat to avoid exposure to extremes of heat/cold. In the event of extreme cold or heat, ambient temperature is adjusted using central heating, fans, or space heaters. In cold weather we keep the heating on low at the Together Centre overnight, and adjust the heating accordingly throughout the day. In very hot weather, we use fans and a portable air conditioning unit.

3e) Cleanliness

All mouse cages are fully cleaned at least weekly. Urine, faeces and old food are removed, surfaces cleansed using anigene disinfectant, and bedding material replaced. During cleaning, we will try to avoid swapping cage items between different mouse groups, to prevent transference of odours.

3f) Light and noise levels

Mouse cages are positioned away from direct sunlight and bright artificial lights. As mice tend to be crepuscular, the cages are sited where they benefit from natural light and darkness cycles.

The cages should be sited away from high pitched sounds, vibrations, ultrasound, loud, and unpredictable sudden bursts of noise.

4. Rabbits and guinea pigs at TTC

The rabbits and guinea pigs will have penned areas with space to lie down, stand up and hide as well as enrichment toys.

5. Exotic animals at TTC

The habitats will contain items such as logs, hammocks and bridges. We will ensure that the habitats also always include other appropriate enrichment items including large hides, foraging toys, and artificial plants.

We provide a reptile-safe sand substrate such as Beardie Life to facilitate natural digging behaviours.

Animal habitats on outreach sessions

See also - Standard Operating Procedures: Animals at Outreach Sessions

1. Small animals

The rabbits and guinea pigs will have a safe penned area in the session with food, water and hiding places. They will be supported by trained staff to protect them from inappropriate behaviours from clients in session – please see respect policy.

2. Dogs

Dogs will attend sessions with handlers and staff that they are familiar with to support their wellbeing. They will have access to water. They will have had training in a similar setting and will have access to calming toys such as the snuffle mat and magic mat.

3. Exotics

At present no exotic animals are taking out to visiting sessions unless by special arrangement

Adaptations to environment for elderly, young, and unwell animals

Pregnant and very young animals

Any animals which are pregnant or nursing, or suspected to be pregnant, will be housed separately from the others. In this instance, we will always seek and follow veterinary advice for the care and housing of the animal/s.

Elderly and unwell animals

Older and/or unwell animals may require alterations to their habitats, depending on the nature of their illness. For example, smaller cages, increased frequency of cleaning, different bedding, temperature changes, or housing apart from other animals. Wherever adaptations need to be made, we will endeavour to provide these as best as possible and in accordance with veterinary advice given at the time.

Animals in transport

Please see: *Animal Welfare During Transport Policy*

Standards of Diet and Nutrition Policy

Date reviewed: 10th May 2021

Introduction

The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 (DEFRA) state that animals must be provided with a suitable diet in terms of quality, quantity and frequency. Any new feeds must be introduced gradually to allow the animals to adjust to them. Staff and volunteers are trained in which foods are and are not safe for the species we work with.

This policy outlines how Noah's A.R.T. will manage and tailor the diet and nutrition of animals to best suit their needs, according to species, health status, and age. This document also details the monitoring, recording and hygiene procedures for food and water intake and preparation.

Dogs

The dogs of Noah's ART are owned by the therapists.

- During sessions, we ensure that the dogs do not receive food treats from volunteers or clients, and receive only the food treats provided by staff.
- Dogs always have fresh water available during sessions
- All therapist dog-owners are responsible for ensuring that their dogs are fed regular healthy meals in accordance with the needs of the dog, e.g. health and age.
- We do not raw feed any of our dogs.

Guinea pigs

Guinea pigs are herbivores. Based on guidance from the PSDA, we observe the following feeding guidelines:

- We provide a constant supply of good quality feeding hay or grass. This should make up at least 80% of their food. We buy our hay from a local farmer to ensure they hay is a good length to support their digestion.
- Our guinea pigs are fed dry pellets and given the recommended quantity as suggested by the supplier. We aim to avoid muesli-style feeds.
- We feed a teacup sized amount of fresh greens per day. We give our guinea pigs a different mix of fresh veg each day.
 - During sessions, the guinea pigs have fresh food in plentiful supply
- Any new food will be introduced slowly over a week, as any sudden changes to their diet could upset their stomachs.
- Constant access to fresh, clean drinking water from a water bottle with a metal spout is provided. Any guinea pigs who struggle using a bottle will be offered a drinking bowl.

- Observations are kept on how much guinea pigs are drinking. An increase may indicate a health problem although some guinea pigs just like to play with their water. (See below: *10. Monitoring and recording*)
- Where possible we try to make feeding more enriching. For example, volunteers make food toys to place around the guinea pig habitats, such as hay balls or hay tunnels to chew on and hide in, gnawing toys or treat kebabs, paper bags filled with hay scattering treats and pellets in their hay for them to sniff out.

Rabbits

The best diet for rabbits is one that's as close to a wild rabbit's diet as possible. We observe the following diet as recommended by PDSA vets:

- At least their own body size in good quality hay each day.
- An adult-sized handful of suitable fresh greens morning and evening – using safe vegetables.
- A tablespoon of rabbit nuggets once daily (or twice daily if the rabbits weigh over 3.5kg). We do not feed our rabbit muesli selection
- Any changes to diet will be introduced over two to three weeks
- Food enrichment toys
- Continuous provision of clean drinking water via bottles and/or bowls

Rats

Based on recommendations from the RSPCA, we observe the following diet and feeding guidelines for rats:

- We use Selective Rat pellets with fresh food as supplement
- Occasional variety - in addition, we will supplement diets with small amounts of fruit/vegetables/cooked egg/grains/seeds, given as part of their daily ration
- Fresh clean drinking water is continuously available. We will check water bottle levels throughout the day and check for blockages, ensure drinkers aren't leaking; -We provide multiple drinkers available so all can drink simultaneously, avoiding competition, ensuring that should one become blocked they still have access to water
- Feeding twice daily - morning and evening
- Food in open bowls - allowing them to carry food and handle/eat it wherever they want.
- We check for uneaten food before re-filling bowls. We provide ceramic rather than metal bowls to avoid ultrasound noise
- Any new foods will be introduced gradually

- Natural foraging behaviours (e.g. handling/manipulating food) is encouraged

Mice

Based on recommendations from the PDSA, we observe the following feeding guidelines:

- We will not make sudden changes to our mice's diet as this can give them an upset stomach. Instead, we will gradually introduce new food day-by-day.
- We provide our mice with Selective mouse and rat food. Mice love variety so we will often mix in different muesli feeds.
- We will also provide small amounts of fresh fruit and vegetables and healthy treats such as boiled or scrambled egg, mealworms, lean meat, beans, peas, chickpeas and other pulses.
- In the wild, mice would spend most of their time searching for food. We use food enrichment toys to recreate this natural behaviour. For example, we may scatter their daily amount of pellets around their cage instead of feeding them from their bowl, and we may hide treats like hay and veg inside paper bags or cardboard tubes and boxes.

Bearded dragon

Based on recommendations from the RSPCA, we observe the following guidelines:

- Bearded dragons may not drink from water bowls often as a lot of their moisture is provided in their diet. However a large, shallow dish will be provided at all times in the cool end with clean, fresh water, should they require it. This will be replaced at least daily and as soon as it is soiled.
- Bearded dragons are 'omnivorous', meaning they eat both live invertebrates (called 'livefood') and plants and vegetables (called 'greens'). We will provide a variety of safe foods, although we do not feed spinach as this prevents calcium absorption. Also, we will avoid too much cabbage or kale as these can affect hormone production.
- We will remove uneaten items every day and replace with fresh. We provide a variety of live invertebrates such as crickets (e.g. brown house crickets), locusts and 'calciworms', no bigger than the size of the dragon's mouth.
- Feeder insects will be kept in a large, well-ventilated container. They will be fed safe vegetables and hydrated well for their own welfare and so that the nutrients are passed onto the bearded dragon.

- Feeder insects will also be 'gut-loaded' with vitamins and minerals by offering them an appropriate formulated gut-loading diet 24-48 hours prior to feeding them to the lizard.
- We will remove uneaten livefood from the vivarium
- We will feed once daily. We try to feed in the morning so that the dragon can digest its food during the day.

Fat-tailed gecko

Based on recommendations by everythingreptiles.com, we observe the following guidelines:

- African Fat-Tailed Geckos are carnivorous, and are not known to consume any plant materials in their natural habitat. Our African Fat-Tailed Gecko will be fed crickets and other types of larval insects like mealworms.
- They will also require additional supplements such as vitamin D3. To provide these nutrients we will 'dust' the insects with calcium or other vitamin powder, or by 'gut loading' their feeder insects.
- African Fat-Tailed Geckos prefer crickets and mealworms. Occasionally we will offer waxworms, silkworms, hornworms and pinky mice
- Uneaten prey will be removed within a few hours if the Gecko has not eaten them.
- There should always be a shallow water dish with clean water in their tank. They may not directly drink from it, however it will help retain moisture.

Indian Stick Insects

The stick insects will be provided with a diet of fresh leaves sprayed daily with water, and replaced once per week. Leaves may include bramble, privet, hawthorn or rose.

Fish

The fish are fed daily, no more than what would take them around two minutes to consume.

Monitoring and recording

- *We record all feedings on monthly or daily feeding charts, with any issues, such as apparent reduction in appetite, noted and reported to animal welfare staff for prioritisation in the health check rota. - **To be updated once animals have moved to TTC***
- All animals are weighed and weight recorded during their standard monthly health check, or more often if issues are suspected.
- Signage at The Together Centre base indicates to staff/volunteers how much food and water to provide each animal

Hygiene and cleaning

- Food bowls and water receptacles are cleaned and dried daily using animal-safe disinfectant.
- Where we prepare feed and fresh vegetables at The Together Centre, we will ensure we adhere to food hygiene standards.
- Fresh food prepared at The Together Centre is kept refrigerated.

Therapy Dog Policy

Date reviewed: 26th April 2021

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure our dogs are always at the heart of any decisions we make in the way we run our therapy sessions. They are the core of our work and this policy will ensure we consider their health, temperament, personalities and type of work that they excel in.

See also: ‘Animal Handling, Interactions and Socialisation Policy and Procedures’

Therapy Dog Assessments

All dogs intended to work in therapy settings must be assessed for suitability by their owner at least every quarter and following any incidents (**see Appendix A**). This is a comprehensive assessment, taking into consideration the dog’s health, temperament, preferences, strengths, weaknesses, suitability for different settings and client groups, resilience and ability to work with other Noah’s ART dogs.

As more information is known about the dog, we can build a picture of ways that we can work with them that plays to their strengths, ensuring they enjoy sessions and work with the right kind of clients for their temperament.

Temperament and personality

Noah’s ART believes that temperament and personality are some of the most important factors informing decisions about when, where, how and whether at all a dog should be incorporated into therapy work. Our dog assessment (Appendix A) is key to monitoring and recording temperament and personality factors and any changes in these that occur over time.

Personality and therapy settings

Like human beings, dogs have very different personalities. They work best when we know their personalities and can assess the best therapy settings for them:

Outreach settings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Hospitals● Care Home● Schools	Risks to be considered <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Unpredictable numbers of guests attending● May meet children visiting residents/patients● Noise levels and environmental conditions beyond our control● Dogs should be tolerant of small animals attending therapy sessions
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Pop Inn – café environment	Risks to be considered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dogs should be friendly toward people ● Dogs should be tolerant of other dogs
Sessions at base	Risks to be considered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Should be tolerant of other therapy dogs with therapists aware of potential flash points ● Dogs should do treat toys separately – remove to another room unless certain the dogs can get along without argument during treat games. ● No more than two dogs at any session – the combination should be tried and tested to ensure no issues ● All therapists should be aware of risk points with working with dogs and small animals at base e.g. Flo & rats, Lennie & rabbits
Fundraising & awareness events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Good with crowds ● Good with other dogs ● Copes with children ● Confident and calm

Life cycle

Young Dogs

Young dogs should be introduced to therapy work gradually, with a focus not on “work” but on familiarizing with the spaces and people. Puppies joining the team should have limited exposure in a managed setting to ensure they get used to therapy work and settings in a positive way. We should ensure they get rest periods and are not officially “working”, just absorbing the therapy environment – noises, smells etc.

Progression into therapy setting should be decided once the initial dog assessment form has been completed. If working with several handlers each handler should make their own assessment.

Before beginning familiarisation work, handlers should:

- Complete an initial dog assessment form
- Teach the dog the magic mat command
- Ensure the dog is toilet-trained
- Introduce the concept of the cage as a safe time out space
- Teach the following basic commands:
 - Sit
 - Stay

Understanding of personality and temperament of a young dog will be a gradual process, as they are exposed to different settings and environments. Dog handlers must record observations in their dog assessment form (**Appendix A**) to build up a comprehensive picture.

Mid-aged and older dogs

As we continue to work with our dogs, we become aware of their changing needs. For example, as they age some dogs may need increased down time. We commit to regularly reassessing and monitoring our adult and older dogs for signs of slowing down, fatigue and stress, and will respond accordingly. For example, we may amend their time in sessions via the animal rota and provide increased break periods.

All dogs, regardless of age, always have access to places of safety and quiet to retreat to if needed. This allows the dogs to make choices about engaging with clients or not.

Additional considerations for dog welfare

- It is the responsibility of dog handlers/owners to ensure their dogs are well and fit enough to work. Any sign of fatigue, injury or illness should raise alarms and question if the dog should work the session.
- All dogs require at least one rest day per week – younger dogs and older dogs will require more rest periods.
- Dogs working at all day sessions should have regular toilet breaks and access to the quiet spaces in the office area in the kitchen
- Outreach therapy sessions will be no longer than two hours, and a safe space to retreat to must be provided (see also: **Standard Operating Procedures: Animals at Outreach Sessions**)
- Handlers should be trained in signs of dog stress and be experts in spotting changes in behaviour in their own dogs that may indicate stress or illness. Dogs that are exhibiting signs of stress during sessions should be allowed to rest with their handler and if necessary, to withdraw from the session activities.
- Handlers must be prepared to stop any interactions that are not in the dog's best interest e.g. rough handling from clients. As a service, we will be prepared to request clients do not attend sessions if they do not have the dog's best interests at heart (see also: **Animal Handling, Interactions and Socialisation Policy and Procedures**)

Dogs working with multiple handlers

Where a dog works with more than one handler, they should have a bond with all the handlers, as dogs look toward their handler when uncertain.

No more than two people should work with one dog on a regular basis.

Dogs working with other dogs

As with humans, we don't always get along with all of our colleagues. It is the responsibility of the dog handlers to know their dog's personality and tolerance toward other dogs.

Any incidents should be fed back to the staff team for analysis and best practice to be developed. Decisions about ability to work with other dogs should also be communicated to the animal rota coordinator to ensure unsuitable dogs are not placed together on the rota – unless they can be physically allocated to a different location e.g. working in the huts or portacabin.

Where working with food toys, staff should work only with one dog at a time to prevent any incidents.

Dog Health & Infection Control Measures

Vaccinations, flea treatment & worming

All therapy dogs need to be vaccinated and regularly wormed. Flea treatment should be appropriate to need but at least 6 monthly – this may need to increase during summer months. It is the responsibility of the dog's owner to ensure that vaccination, flea and worming treatments are carried out.

Dogs require regular vet checks and long-term health issues should be assessed as part of the dog's Dog Assessment (**see Appendix A**).

Infectious diseases

Occasionally, our dogs may contract an infectious illness. Therapists should report the illness as soon as possible via the therapist Facebook group. This will allow other dog handlers to be on the alert for any signs of illness in their dogs. In this instance, we will only work with one dog per session; this will help to prevent any cross infection between dogs.

Careful consideration must be made of visits to vulnerable and immune-compromised clients.

On occasion, disease may be spread between species. Any dog handler with a dog that has an infectious illness should observe good hand hygiene. At times, we may need to cancel sessions if deemed appropriate.

Our dog friendly café may also be affected – we may need to stop our dogs from attending in order to safeguard visiting dogs.

Session toys and equipment

All treat toys should be wiped after use or at least every two weeks using Clinell wipes.

Appendix A – Dog assessment

Dog's name		Date of review:	Status at original check	New / Novice / Pro
Record changes to therapy status with explanation of reason for change:				
Date	Status	Comments	Cautions/Implications	
Notes				

Topic	Considerations	Comments	Status/Cautions
Health	Age considerations Recent illness injury Recent vet advice Medication Any issues with mobility		
Clients	children adults People with disabilities Wheelchairs Autism/ADHD Dementia Brain Injury		
Setting specifics	Hot environment Large groups/crowds Strong smells/heat Lack of outside spaces		

	At The Together Centre		
Frequency & duration of work	Daily 2-3 days per week weekly occasional 30min max 60min max 90min max		
Dogs personality & session activities	<p>Socially driven</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly <p>Intelligent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoys puzzles • Challenges <p>Physically active</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agility • Walking • playful <p>Obedient</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assertiveness training <p>Responsive to clients' needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read to rabbits • relaxation work 		

	<p>Food driven</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • treat games • snuffle mats • scent work 		
Dogs play preferences	Treats oriented toy oriented e.g. balls Fetch agility games relaxation		
Resilience	easily startled slow recovery easily made anxious attachment issues ability to work with multiple handlers independent confident		
specific issues	barking enjoys running off & escaping Nipping feet hates children not good with other dogs/specific dogs Noisy environments		

	etc		
Working with other Noah's ART therapy dogs (or others dogs)			

Animal Handling, Interactions and Socialisation Policy and Procedures

Date reviewed: 26th April 2021

Introduction

The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 (DEFRA) state that new animals must be given opportunities to learn how to interact with people, their own species and other animals where such interaction benefits their welfare, and to become habituated to noises, objects and activities in their environments. This is particularly relevant to the field of animal-assisted therapy, where animals may be exposed to different settings and experiences.

The 2018 Regulations also state that a policy must be in place for monitoring the introduction of new animals to existing groups, to avoid stress to either new or resident animals and outlining steps that must be taken should a problem arise.

As such, this document details how Noah's ART will:

- Safely introduce new animals to each other/existing groups
- Habituate new animals to the requirements of therapy settings, e.g. the venues, noises, objects, activities, human interaction and other animals often present in the line of this type of work
- Monitor and respond to animals' suitability for therapy work
- Minimise stress to the animals
- Monitor and control the handling of therapy animals

Dogs

For full details on the dog assessment, habituation and monitoring process, please refer to 'Therapy Dog Policy'.

Guinea pigs and Rabbits

Habituation and assessment

Rescued and new rabbits and guinea pigs in Noah's ART will undergo a process of habituation:

See also: 'Standard Operating Procedure: Newly Adopted or Sick/Injured Animals'

- All new animals undergo a one month period of quarantine away from other animals and clients.

- During the quarantine period, they will be handled and monitored by staff to assess their temperaments and reaction to being with people. Incidents and observations of risk should be recorded on a Small Animal Temperament Assessment Form.
- As soon as possible during this period, the animals will undergo an initial health check and small animal temperament assessment
- Any signs of injury or illness during the quarantine period will require appropriate action, as per the '*Standard Operating Procedure: Newly Adopted or Sick/Injured Animals*'.
- Animals moving out of quarantine will then enter the therapy risk categorisation system:

1. NEW

- The first category, which all new animals fall into, is **NEW**. These animals will be taken to sessions but will not be available for handling.
- They will begin by attending base to attend animal welfare checks and begin the socialization process. This way, they are habituated to travelling and the therapy room environment before any client interactions.
- Staff and volunteers can observe and set up the pens to help the animals become accustomed to a session environment, e.g. the table, tablecloth, hiding areas, hay toys etc
- They will get used to the smells and sounds of the dogs

2. NOVICE

- Progression to the next stage of NOVICE will be determined by the rabbit/guinea pig and the way they cope with the habituation sessions
- At Novice stage, animals will be handled by staff and specially selected clients.
- They will be carefully monitored for any problem behaviours e.g. nipping, by trained staff
- No animal care by clients will be suggested; just holding and gentle stroking and offering food treats
- Experienced staff will handle the animals (if guinea pigs) wrapping and feeding with tasty vegetables.
- Guinea pigs who are very frightened and timid will need shorter spells of contact with humans with gradual increase in time held
- Rabbits will be allowed to explore and engage with humans on their own terms and offered tasty treats

- Grooming of the rabbits will gradually be introduced getting them used to human contact on their terms

3. PRO

- Once staff feel the animal is settling in sessions, they can progress to the category of PRO
- In this category, staff will supervise clients to handle, bathe or groom animals

Routine Monitoring

The categories of risk are fluid and can change throughout a session. All staff and volunteers should be vigilant for any changes in behaviour which may indicate stress or illness (see also: '**Standard Operating Procedure: Health Checks**'). Any changes may need the risk categories to be re-evaluated.

- Regular (at least monthly) health checks and temperament assessments are made as part of ongoing handling and socialisation of rescue and therapy guinea pigs and rabbits (and often take place as part of sessions)
- Animals showing signs of injury are not included in therapy sessions, as injured animals are more likely to bite and be stressed
- Animals showing signs of illness will not be included in therapy sessions, but rested and suitable veterinary care sought
- Animals recovering from illness or injury, if they seem well enough, may attend sessions but will be placed back in the NEW or NOVICE categories initially, to reduce stress on them and likelihood of biting
- Incidents noted during sessions will be recorded and changes to the category system made as appropriate
- Animals who are not coping in NEW category will be rested from therapy sessions and may be re-evaluated at a later date and after volunteers have worked on handling and socialising

Outreach Sessions

Please refer to **'Standard Operating Procedures: Animals at Outreach Sessions'** for details of our selection, habituation, assessment and monitoring of animals at outreach sessions/

Clients visiting sessions at base

- We are much more likely to have an understanding of client behaviour and capability if they have been attending regular sessions
- All the major handling principles outlined in **'Standard Operating Procedures: Animals at Outreach Sessions'** will be observed with the animals at base
- As part of therapeutic progression, clients may be offered more responsibility and hands-on experience with the animals if assessed as appropriate by the lead therapist. For example, we may teach the client the safest way to pick up and handle rabbits
- Interactions with the rabbits will be offered either in the pens or on the sofa bed areas to allow the rabbit the chance to withdraw from interaction if required

Recording incidents

- Any accidents or incidents involving the animals, e.g. bites, that occur in the course of therapy work should be recorded in the accident book and lead therapists notified
- The incident should then be recorded on the master spreadsheet
- Follow-up procedure:
 - Remove the animal from therapy work for a period of assessment
 - A health check should then be undertaken, to ensure the animal is not in pain or unwell
 - A new temperament assessment should then be carried out
 - Lead staff should check if any similar incidents have occurred before
 - The team will then make a decision about the risk category of the animal

Returning to sessions following injury, operations or disease

- All animals who have been withdrawn from therapy work following a period of illness, should return only when fully fit
- Before returning to therapy work, the animal should undergo a health check and temperament assessment
- Lead staff should observe the animals and return them to the cage if they show any signs of distress

Bonding procedure

- Where possible, all animals will be housed with at least one other animals of their own species
- Bonding sessions will take place during carefully selected therapy sessions where appropriate, or during down time between activities
- In the case of rabbits and guinea pigs, the bonding process may be long. The following procedure will be followed:
 - Swap the animals between their respective enclosures for a short period of time
 - Place the animals' side by side with a barrier so they can get to know each other's sight and smells
 - Remove the barrier for short periods, and note the interactions
 - Return to watching by barrier if any aggressive incidents occur
 - Gradually increase the time they are together without the barrier until satisfied that the two animals are bonded.
 - Where possible we aim to develop this bond but it may not be possible.
 - After a period of trying, experienced staff will make a decision that the bonding is not successful and consider whether the animal is better to be solitary. E.g. a very old rabbit may be better on their own, than undergoing the stress of repeated bonding attempts.

Rats & Mice

- New rodents will undergo a reduced version of the Habituation, Assessment and Categorisation procedures described above for the rabbits/guinea pigs
- We will aim to handle young mice and rats as regularly as possible (within the limitations of the animals' tolerance and welfare). This process of socialization allows them to go on to be safely handled by clients

- As rats and mice have short lives, it is not always possible to rehabilitate an older animal that has had a bad experience
- Any rodents that are identified as unsuitable will not be used in therapy settings due to risk of bites
- Lead therapists and experience volunteers should assess the clients' suitability at handling the rats and mice e.g. appropriate grip, not being used as a tool to scare others, alertness to the animals' quick movements
- Any incidents with the rats/mice should be reported as soon as possible to understand if the animal is injured/unwell, needs further socialising or whether the client could be educated further about appropriate handling

Exotics

General principles of handling and interaction

- The dogs should not be present when handling the reptiles in case they attempt to leap from the contact
- Animals will never be left unattended outside of vivariums
- Reptiles will be transported in secure carriers with appropriate heating
- Staff handling reptiles should have training and knowledge in potential hazards associated with species e.g. bites, infections. Too rough handling with reptile may trigger defense mechanisms.
- All staff and participants will observe good hand hygiene after handling reptiles .e.g. hand gel or hand wash available
- Any incidents to be dealt with by first aiders and recorded
- Any indication of aggression from animals will result in the animal not being used in therapy sessions. The accident book should be completed, and a review health

check and temperament assessment carried out to understand what may be triggering behaviours

- Animals to have lots of rest periods to ensure they can reduce stress levels

Indian Stick Insects

Stick insects are very fragile and may lose limbs easily if roughly handled. Staff should pick up the insect and give it to the client, then monitor the client's behaviour toward the insect.

Standard Operating Procedures - Death or Escape of an Animal

Date reviewed: 1st June 2021

Introduction

The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 state that written procedures must be in place for the death or escape of an animal (including the storage of carcasses). This document details the steps Noah's A.R.T. takes to respond to these events.

Death of an animal on the premises

On discovering that an animal has died:

- Put on plastic gloves
- Wrap the carcass in a towel and remove it from the enclosure.
- Seal the carcass in a plastic bag.
- If the death is unexpected and/or the cause of death is unknown, all persons handling the carcass must wear additional PPE in line with the Noah's ART **Infection Control Policy**
- Remove any other live animals and deep clean the enclosure.
- Small animals may be buried in the garden at the Noah's ART Droylsden base, or arrangements made with a licensed pet crematorium or veterinary practice for cremation. Larger animals, such as dogs, must be dealt with by a licensed pet crematorium, veterinary practice or pet cemetery service.

Euthanasia

If a Noah's ART animal is euthanised or dies at a veterinary practice, Noah's ART will make arrangements with the practice for the safe disposal of the carcass by cremation. Animals that have been euthanised, been treated with chemo or received controlled drugs prior to their death must not be buried.

Escape

Should an animal escape from The Together Centre base, Droylsden base or during an outreach session, the following procedure must be followed:

- Alert the lead member of staff at the session/venue
- Staff and volunteers must remain calm, and reassure any clients or visitors present

- Ensure that all animal enclosures are secured
- Check that all other animals are accounted for
- As a team, identify the potential locations that the animal/s may have escaped to, bearing in mind the type, temperament and natural instincts of the animal/s
- Search the areas identified
- If the animal/s cannot be located, provision must be made for staff member/s to stay in the area for a number of hours, should the animal/s return

Dogs

In the case of a missing dog, the dog's owner must contact:

- Tameside MBC dog warden service
- The microchip database with which the dog is registered
- Local veterinary practices

Learning from escapes

Following an escape, a team meeting should be called in which the escape, the events leading up to it and the team's response must be discussed. A record of the incident must then be written.

Medication Policy and Procedures

Date reviewed: 16th June 2021

This document details Noah's ART's policies and procedures for the administration, storage and documentation of veterinary medications, both prescription and non-prescription.

Storage of prescription medications

- Medicines prescribed following veterinary consultation will be stored either at the Droysden or Together Centre base, depending on the location of the relevant animal's permanent home and on the treatment plan. For example, if the animal cannot travel to The Together Centre for health checks and treatment, the medication will be stored at the Droysden base.
- Prescribed medicines will be stored safely and securely in a locked cabinet, to safeguard against unauthorised access.
- The exception to this rule is if the prescribed medicines need to be stored at a lower temperature, in which case they will be refrigerated.
- An audit and stock-take of medication supplies is carried out every month (**see Appendix A: Welfare Supplies Inventory**).
- Expired medicines will be disposed of safely via return to the veterinary practice

Storage of non-prescription medications

- Medicines other than prescribed medicines will be stored, used and disposed of in accordance with the instructions of the manufacturer, or as recommended by the veterinarian if applicable.
- Medicines other than prescribed medicines will also be stored in locked cabinets at The Together Centre and Droysden bases.

- An audit and stock-take of medication supplies is carried out every month (**see Appendix A: Welfare Supplies Inventory**). Expired medicines will be disposed of safely in accordance with the instructions given on the container.

Administration

- Medications will only be administered in accordance with the instructions of the veterinarian, or the manufacturer if non-prescription.
- Upon prescription, the veterinarian's instructions must be recorded in the care plan of the relevant animal and a plan made for ensuring the animal is able to be treated as prescribed. This may involve temporarily moving the animal to the Droylsden base sick bay or to the home of a staff member for closer monitoring.
- Medications must only be administered by staff and volunteers trained to do so.
- Staff and volunteers must be supervised by another member of staff or suitably qualified volunteer when administering medications.
- The staff member/volunteer who administers the medication must record this on the Medication Administration Record for the relevant animal (**See - Appendix B: MAR Sheet**).

Standard Operating Procedure: Health Checks

Date reviewed: 14th June 2021

This document outlines how Noah's ART monitors, identifies, records and responds to behaviour and health-related changes and issues in its animals. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure the health and wellbeing of all of our animals at all times.

See also: 'Standard Operating Procedures: Animal welfare records - recording, storage, prioritisation and retention'.

Monitoring Behaviour

Observing changes in behaviour is key to identifying potential health and welfare issues.

- Animals undergo regular temperament assessments - on adoption, during every health check and following any incidents
- All staff and volunteers will be trained in the normal behaviour of all species that Noah's ART works with, and in observing abnormal behaviours.
- Staff and volunteers must be alert to the animals' behaviours at all times when working with or alongside the animals.
- Staff and volunteers must report concerns about behaviours to the lead member of staff at the session, who will then take further action as appropriate (see below).

Health Checks - Prioritisation

See also: 'Standard Operating Procedures: Animal welfare records - recording, storage, prioritisation and retention'.

All Noah's ART animals undergo at least a monthly routine health check with our animal welfare team (consisting of trained staff and volunteers). Monthly health check record sheets are maintained at The Together Centre.

However, prioritisation for additional health checks is also informed by a number of factors:

- A master animal health database is maintained which details most recent health checks and other factors such as age and need for follow-up treatments. The staff member responsible for producing the weekly animal rota checks the database each week. This will inform which animals they rota to be health-checked/treated that week.

- In addition, a prioritisation noticeboard is maintained at The Together Centre. The noticeboard is informed by communications from staff and volunteers following regular observation of behaviour during sessions and at the Droylsden base, and is maintained by Noah's ART staff responsible for animal welfare.
- Staff and volunteers are trained to adhere to the following procedure when working with or alongside the animals, in order to ensure that changes in behaviour and potential health issues are picked up on swiftly:
 1. If you notice a concern during a session, handling or cleaning - e.g. nails need trimming, apparent injury, animal behaving abnormally - inform the lead member of staff
 2. The lead member of staff will then assess the urgency of the concern and either add the task/concern to the noticeboard or take immediate action, such as contacting the veterinary practice.

Monthly Health Check Procedure

Staff and volunteers are trained to follow the below procedure when taking part in routine monthly animal health checks:

- Prior to commencing the health check, refer to the master database and any special care plans relevant to the animal to re-familiarise yourself with the animal's history and previous health checks
- Prepare a blank health check and temperament assessment form for the correct species
- Systematically work through each section of the health check/temperament assessment form, documenting as you go (See Appendix A)
- Administer relevant medication (if trained to do so and under supervision if required), and record this using the Medication Administration Record. See also - '**Medication Policy**'.
- Record that the health check/temperament assessment has been done on the monthly health check record sheet (See Appendix B)
- Weigh the animal and record on their health check/temperament assessment sheet
- The lead animal welfare volunteer will then update the master database and any care plans with all relevant information arising from the health check
- The lead animal welfare volunteer will then communicate with the relevant Noah's ART staff member as to any further action required, i.e. vet visits or ongoing treatment.

Rabbits - additional notes

- Where possible, we will get in the pen with the rabbits to carry out health checks, rather than removing them from the pen.
- Rabbits do not undergo a full health check every month, but will have a basic check instead. This is to minimise stress.
- Rabbit health checks require two staff/volunteers and should not be carried out alone

Care of sick and injured animals

Following identification on health issues or injuries requiring ongoing care, please refer to - **'Standard Operating Procedure for care of newly adopted or sick/injured animals'**.

Appendix A: Example Health Check Form



Date:.....

Attendee:.....

Name:



Action	✓	Notes/ Action taken
check previous history		
Weight (+/-)		
Nose: Clean, Dry, any redness and swelling, wounds		
Eyes: Clean, bright		
Mouth: Dry, clean, redness and wounds, any masses when lower jaw palpated		

Teeth: Overgrown, broken, split		
Ears: Clean, dry, discharge? (colour)		
Skin and fur: Bald patches, matted fur? Any wounds? Skin irritation? Any signs of mites or fleas		
Tail and bottom: Clean and dry, any faeces or urine soiling?		
Inguinal (scent) glands. Is there a lot of sebum?		
Healthy droppings and urine		
Feet clean and dry: Any signs of dry hocks and soreness		
Nails normal length		
Movement normal		
Temperament		

Additional notes:



Appendix B: Monthly Health Check Sheet Example

RABBITS

Name	April	May	June
Lucky			
Marvin			
Tink			
Nick			
Rea			
Fifi			
Frankie			
Tash			
Rosie			
Oatie			
Bobafett			
Hope			
Bessie			
Maxie			
Dotty			
Princess Leia			
Biscuit			
Cuddles			
Louis			
Lulu			
Rodger			

Standard Operating Procedure: Newly Adopted and Sick/Injured Animals

Date reviewed: 7th April 2021

Newly Adopted

On occasion, Noah's ART accepts rescued animals looking for new homes from either other organisations or the general public.

General principles

- We will strive to get as much information about the animal's medical history from the previous owner as possible. Where appropriate this will include proof of vaccinations and neutering.
- We will also aim to have as much information as possible about the animals temperament and behaviour, as this is an important part of recognising stress and illness in prey animals such as rabbits.
- We will take an 'Adoptions Form' when picking up new animals, to help us obtain all the required information

Health checks

- New animals will undergo a health check by suitably qualified Noah's ART staff and volunteers as soon as is practicable and in isolation from any other animals also being health checked
 - Where significant issues are identified or the needs of the animal require professional assessment, the animal will then also be vet checked.
- New animals will be closely monitored and assessed for health issues by staff and volunteers who are adequately qualified to do so.
- New animals will be vaccinated and neutered where appropriate

Quarantine and infection control

- To prevent the spread of disease, infection and parasites to resident animals, new animals will be quarantined upon arrival.
 - They will be kept in a hutch/enclosure that is to be exclusively used for quarantine purposes, and is able to be fully cleaned and disinfected.
 - This will be kept in an area away from the resident animals, and will be separate from the sick bay area.
 - Animals will remain in quarantine for one month. These animals will not be used in therapy work, or exposed to the resident animals during this time.
 - The only time they will leave the quarantine area is to be health-checked in

isolation, or taken to the vet

- Strict hygiene procedures will be followed by all staff or volunteers who handle or care for new animals
 - All equipment used will only be used in the quarantine area and will be thoroughly disinfected weekly, and after the month is over. This includes: dustpans, brushes, water bottles, non perishable toys, bottle brushes, litter trays, grooming supplies.
 - Any towels used to handle new animals will be laundered and disinfected immediately.
 - Dirty bedding will be disposed of immediately.
 - Disposable gloves will be used when handling new animals, and hand washing will be done before handling resident animals or anything that comes into contact with them.

Temperament assessment

- During their initial assessment by staff (after quarantine period), new animals will have their temperament and behaviour monitored and assessed. This is carried out in order to design socialisation plans, and suitability for therapy work.
- Observations will be recorded on the Small Animal Temperament Assessment Form or Dog Assessment Form.
- New animals will then enter the therapy risk classification system - NEW, NOVICE, PRO (see '*Handling, Interactions and Socialisation Policy*').

See also:

- ***Small Animal Temperament Assessment Form***
- ***Dog Assessment Form***
- ***Handling, Interactions and Socialisation Policy***

Sick Animals

- Animals that are showing signs of illness should be restricted to the sick bay areas at the Droysden base/staff home, until they are fully recovered and have completed any course of treatment.
- Where appropriate, such as in the case of contagious disease or infections, the quarantine hygiene procedures outlined above will be followed.
- Regardless of the infectious status of the animal, anyone handling or caring for any sick animals must adhere to strict hand hygiene procedures before and after handling the

animal, and between handling the animal and other resident animals.

- All staff and volunteers are trained in recognising signs of illness and stress in the animals we work with.
 - Signs of illness in any animal should be reported to a member of staff immediately
 - See - **SOP: Health Checks**
- Routine health checks are carried out once a month on all the animals (See - **SOP: Health Checks**)
 - If signs of illness are observed during a health check, they will be recorded on the health check form. A care plan should then be filled in detailing the symptoms and the action taken or required, and communicated to all relevant staff members.
- When necessary, the animal will be taken to the vet, and their advice followed.
 - Vet visits will be recorded on the care plan and master welfare database
 - The name of any medication and the dosage will also be recorded. (See - **Medication Policy**)
- All illnesses, injuries and treatments must be recorded on the master welfare database.
- Animals that are ill or injured will not be used in therapy work.
- If the animal normally lives at the Together Centre, it will be brought to the Droylsden base/staff home sick bay to allow for closer monitoring if appropriate.

Fire Escape Procedure - Droylsden Base

Date reviewed: 12th April 2021

- **Step 1** – Raise the alarm.

Anyone discovering a fire should raise the alarm immediately, regardless as to how small the outbreak is or how innocuous it appears to be. Inform the nearest staff member and dial 999 immediately.

- **Step 2** – Evacuate.

Evacuation should be prompt and calm, with everyone making their way to the designated assembly point **at the end of the driveway by the large conifer tree**. It will not be possible to remove all the animals.

- Leash the dogs
- **If the fire is in the back garden**, exit either through the bedroom exit or via the conservatory. If the fire is blocking the conservatory route - exit via the bedroom. If the fire is blocking the conservatory route - exit via the conservatory route
- **If the fire is in the back garden**, if suitable use the fire extinguisher to put out the fire.
- **If the fire is in the house** and both exit routes are blocked, we will remove a fence panel and exit into our neighbour's garden (no3) – permission given
- Close the doors to contain the fire within the house on the way out of the property
- Wait outside the house at the assembly point. Do not re-enter, the premises until the all clear is given

. A separate fire escape procedure is in place for The Together Centre base.

Animal Welfare In The Event of Owner's Death Policy

Date reviewed: 12th April 2021

Introduction

In the event of sudden death, *The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018* (DEFRA) state that animals must be considered and their welfare assured.

In the event of death or hospitalization

In the event of an accident or death which prevents the animals' owner from delivering care and accessing the animals, Noah's ART has several key holders who will be contactable.

The property is also occupied by the owner's husband and younger son who will provide interim care until a longer-term solution is arranged.

Key holders are:

- Tom Hall (owners' eldest son)
- Alana Tennent (lead therapist)
- Catherine Priest (lead therapist)

Emergency care will be offered by the team until the owner is fit and well to resume or an alternative owner is found for the business.

Death of owner

As Noah's ART is a family business, the eldest son of the owner will assume overall responsibility for animal welfare duties with the help of the team on a rota basis.

Sick or very young animals will be fostered out to experienced animal welfare volunteers.

Please note - Noah's ART's long term plan is to keep all the animals at our therapy centre, where they will be cared for by the team and volunteers. The centre will have staff attending seven days per week to ensure animal care is carried out.

Winding down the company

Should the company be wound down, the animals will be supported to live out their lives at base or put up for adoption.

Standard Operating Procedures: Animals at Outreach Sessions

Date reviewed: 12th April 2021

See also: 'Animal Handling, Interactions and Socialisation Policy and Procedures'; 'Risk Register'

Risk assessment

Outreach settings can be riskier than sessions held at our base, as we do not always have prior knowledge of the attending clients. As such, special consideration must be taken for the welfare of the animals during outreach, in addition to ensuring the safety of the clients.

Noah's ART's risk register, including our risk assessment for outreach sessions, is regularly reviewed and updated.

Experienced lead therapists are responsible for instructing the support team and facility staff in risk management procedures. In addition, all facilities must read and sign our disclaimer.

Animal selection

Using the calendar, trained staff will select which animals are suitable for the visits in that week. This will take into consideration:

- The needs of the clients e.g. relaxed, calm rabbits etc
- The health of the animals
- Whether the animals enjoy human interaction
- How often they will go out in one week and the level of interactions they will get from clients
- The status of the animal
 - Pro - experienced
 - Novice – some experience but still learning, post recovery from op/illness
 - New – recently adopted/ recently recovering from injury, illness or operation
 - Retired – these animals will not be selected for visits but may work with clients at base
- Newly socialised animals will only attend sessions once per week until they show signs of confidence and comfort in the outreach sessions and no signs of distress on return to habitats after therapy work
- Animals attending visits such as to schools, NHS or care homes should be the more experienced animals (PRO category) who have shown resilience and predictability of behaviour

- Unwell or injured animals or animals undergoing veterinary treatment will not be selected for outreach sessions.

Animal rotas

- The rota will be prepared in advance and will take into account animals and clients that have bonded. An experienced team member should do the rota or oversee it to ensure it is accurate and reflects the animals welfare needs.
- Where possible we aim to develop this bond but it may not be possible e.g.
 - Where animal has already been out that week
 - Shows signs of illness or injury

Environment

- Animals will take part in outreach sessions with their bonded pairs/groups, if applicable
- Therapy spaces used in outreach sessions should provide for the five welfare needs of the animals as appropriate. Small spaces may require some creativity in delivering this
- Staff will be prepared with a fully equipped box which is reviewed regularly and should include all items required to support the five welfare needs:
 - Suitable hay toys
 - Food & water
 - Towels for handling
 - Protective cloths for tables & chairs
 - Places to hide

Client engagement

- All facilities must read and sign our disclaimer, which contains basic information about our expectations of client (and staff) behaviour around the animals.
- The rabbits will not be picked up or handled by anyone but Noah's ART staff. Rabbits will be placed on a table/sofa to be groomed or viewed.
- Guinea pigs may be handled if properly wrapped in towels and fed favourite suitable food, as this helps them to be more still and enjoy the interactions

- Clients must be seated while handling the animals and will be supervised by Noah's ART staff
- Facility staff may hold the guinea pig in the towel to engage their residents with support from our staff and volunteers
- On occasion it may be permissible to take a guinea pig to visit a patient who is unable to join the main therapy session. A staff member from Noah's ART must attend with the facility staff and be responsible for handling and making the decision about whether the animal is safe to be placed with the client, e.g. on the bed/overbed tray etc.
- Noah's ART team will offer hand gels for cleaning after handling
- Rats and mice may also be handled under close supervision
- Wipes will be available to clean up any animal waste as required
- Noah's ART staff will clean any animal waste at the end of the sessions

Staff requirements

- Staffing requirements will vary according to the session.
- In circumstances where there is only one staff, only the dogs and one other animal at a time should be made available to ensure safety of clients and animals. Sessions may need to be cancelled if it is deemed unsafe to continue e.g. staff trying to get other animals out of the cages etc.
- Each session will have a lead member of staff, who has at least 6-12 months experience and has undergone our AAT training 2 day course
- Staff need to be prepared to advocate for animals and remove them to travel cages if clients are being inappropriate or animals show signs of distress

Supporting therapy dogs during outreach

See also: 'Animal Handling, Interactions and Socialisation Policy and Procedures'; 'Therapy Dog Policy'

- Staff should have experience of mat work with dogs to support the dogs while they settle into session work
- All dogs should be regularly assessed for suitability and temperament, and reassessed for injury/illness
- All dogs will be up to date with vaccinations, flea and worming
- All dogs will undergo Noah's ART training and assessment requirements
- Each dog will have the amount of sessions they can work assessed regularly, and with which other dogs they can work together
- Dogs should not work more than 3 days in a week and should have regular rest breaks and toilet breaks
- Sessions should not be more than 2 hours long
- Dogs should have safe spaces where they can rest without being disturbed

