

The Myton Hospices

# Guidance for the Management of Animals Visiting



# Introduction

Pets are part of our families. Losing their constant companionship and unconditional love can prove overwhelming for some patients who are admitted to The Myton Hospices Inpatient Unit (IPU). With this in mind we actively support and encourage family pets to visit patients during their stay. However animals can carry infections which can occasionally be transmitted to humans, particularly people who have an immune system that has been impaired by disease or medical treatment or who have other health problems. Some animals may also be difficult to control and may pose risks to patients and staff due to their behaviour. Careful handling and management of visiting pets coupled with sensible infection control precautions can reduce this risk to an acceptable level.

## Family pets visiting The Myton Hospices

To ensure an uneventful visit to the IPU or Day Hospice we ask that staff, volunteers and pet handlers always follow the guidance below:

Prior to visiting the nursing staff must be informed of the intention to bring any pet in to the hospice. This will enable staff to identify whether there are vulnerable patients who may be put at risk from contact with the visiting pet; ensuring the animal is kept away from the patients at risk and whether any other conditions or restrictions are necessary.

Visiting pets must, of course, be healthy, well-behaved, quiet and supervised so that they don't disturb others.

Visiting dogs must be brought into the hospice on a lead. Cats must be brought to the hospice in a cat basket/box.

The pet must not be allowed to approach anyone other than the patient they are visiting without the handler first asking;

- Whether the adult or child is likely to be allergic to the animal's fur/hair
- Whether the adult or child wishes to be approached by the pet

Visiting animals must be kept away from food preparation/consumption areas, clinical rooms (e.g. treatment room, sluice room, drug room) or the laundry room.

Disposable gloves must be worn by the pet handler when cleaning up animal urine and faeces; all waste material should be placed in a sealed bag and disposed of immediately as clinical waste.

The handler of any animal visitors brought to the hospice must acknowledge the authority of the Nurse/Therapist in charge and comply with any specific instructions given.

If pets become ill, e.g. with diarrhoea, they will be excluded from visiting.

If staff or patients who may come into contact with the animal have any wounds, sores or broken areas of skin, these must be kept covered at all times.

Staff must refrain from holding pets against their uniform. However where this is unavoidable disposable aprons should be worn.

After touching the pet or visiting animal all concerned (patients, staff, visitors) must wash their hands and forearms thoroughly.

## **IPU only**

The patient bedding should be protected with a draw sheet, incontinence pad or specified blanket for the use of the pet only, if the visiting animal is to be placed on the bed and these removed immediately when the visit is over.

Pets should be prevented from visiting patients who are ill with diarrhoea and vomiting where an infective cause is strongly suspected.

The pet must be fed using designated stainless steel or earthenware bowls and in designated areas only. At the end of feeding, bowls should be removed, washed and stored dry.

Pet baskets and/or bedding should be laundered and washed regularly by the pet owner.

Pets other than Guide dogs are not permitted to stay overnight.

Good general hygiene and hand washing are essential for risk reduction. By ensuring that all the above advice is followed, the physical and psychological benefits of having pets should improve the quality of life of our patients and their families.

## Pets as Therapy Animals

Pets As Therapy (PAT) is a national charity founded in 1983 by Lesley Scott-Ordish. Visiting pets can enhance health and wellbeing in the community through the visits of trusted volunteers with their behaviourally assessed animals. PAT animals are welcomed onto our IPU's and Day Hospices on a regular basis.

All animals coming into the hospice as 'therapy animals' must be affiliated to/endorsed by the Pets as Therapy organisation.

All cats and dogs used by the Pets as Therapy (PAT) organisation will have a record detailing their vaccinations, visits to the vet and state of health. This helps to minimise the risk of the animal harbouring an infection which could be transmitted to patients. A copy of the animal's health record should be available on request. PAT animals are temperament assessed, must be over 9 months old, fully wormed and covered by the PAT insurance scheme.

Any PAT animal visiting a clinical area should be accompanied at all times by its registered owner. All visits must be pre-arranged. The nurse in charge of the clinical area will determine whether the PAT animal will be allowed into the area and whether any conditions or restrictions are necessary.

Due to the potential risks posed when feeding pets Raw Meat Based Diets the hospice cannot accept visits from therapy dogs fed on raw meat.



## Raw meat based diets:

Prior to visiting it is essential that nursing staff are informed if pets are fed on raw meat.

It is important to ensure that due to the potential risks posed when feeding pets Raw Meat Based Diets any pets fed on raw meat must be restricted to the room of the patient they are visiting and must refrain from having contact with any other patients whilst in the hospice.

With regret Day Hospice cannot accept visits from pets fed on raw meat.

## Coventry

Clifford Bridge Road  
Coventry, CV2 2HJ  
02476 841900

## Rugby

Barby Road  
Rugby, CV22 5PY  
01788 550085

## Warwick

Myton Lane,  
Warwick, CV34 6PX  
01926 492518

01926 492518

[mytonhospice.org](http://mytonhospice.org)

   @MytonHospices

Registered Charity No. 516287

