



Animal welfare policy

- ✚ It's important that all animals involved within Animal Assisted Therapy sessions are willing to participate in activities and find sessions enjoyable. Just like us, animals sometimes have their 'off days' and communicate that it's just not their day. It's important that we listen to the animals and adapt sessions accordingly.
- ✚ Each of the Therapy animals are carefully selected, ensuring they have the correct temperament/behavior and are physically able to participate within Animal Assisted Therapy sessions.
- ✚ Animals are always given a choice when participating within sessions, having the right to disengage with activities at any point.
- ✚ If any of the animals show any signs of stress or discomfort of any kind, they will be removed from the session.
- ✚ Animals are very susceptible to our feelings and emotions and should only work for short periods of time and not work every day. The animals at PAWS for thought Counselling work for 1 session a day (1 hour), three times a week, allowing plenty of time for rest and maintain a good quality of life. Working animals for long periods of time every day can have a huge impact on their stress levels.
- ✚ Rolo receives an annual check by a veterinarian to ensure he is fit and healthy to work. He also receives an annual behavioral assessment to ensure he has a suitable temperament, to carry out therapeutic work.
- ✚ Once the session has finished, animals should be able to return to their normal day-to-day life, whether this is grazing in the field (summer), or relaxing in the shed (winter). This also ensures that the animals are spending time with their own kind and enabled to express their natural behaviors in a suitable and environment. All animals should have regular, non-negotiable days off.
- ✚ In the summer months, sessions will be moved to early morning or evening, to ensure that the animals do not work in excessive heat, putting their health at risk. This will be discussed with clients during their consultation session. On days of extreme heat, the animals will not be expected to work, and alternative activities will be organized.
- ✚ Each of the animals have a limited number of hours they work each week (1 session per day, 3 times a week). The animals work on rotation, which is explained during consultation sessions.
- ✚ At PAWS for Thought Counselling, all animal welfare needs are kept at the forefront of what we do.



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- ✚ All of the animals have regular health checks to ensure they are fit to work. Each of the animals have their own health record which any medications and vet visits are recorded.
- ✚ Practitioners will have the relevant knowledge of animal behavior, to make sure that they animals are happy and attend to their needs when necessary, during therapy sessions.
- ✚ We use a range of different activities during sessions, ensuring that sessions remain fun and engaging for all involved.
- ✚ At PAWS for thought Counselling animal welfare needs are upmost importance and we abide by the 5 acts of freedom:
 1. Freedom from hunger and thirst: Animals should have access to fresh water and a diet that keeps them healthy.
 2. Freedom from discomfort: Animals should have a comfortable rest area and shelter
 3. Freedom from pain, injury, or disease: Animals should be treated for pain, injury, or disease as soon as possible.
 4. Freedom to express normal behavior: Animals should have enough space to move around, and the company of other animals of their own kind.
 5. Freedom from fear and distress: Animals should be treated in a way that avoids mental suffering.

All elements of my Animal welfare policy are reviewed annually, or earlier if necessary.

X

Date: 01/03/2025

Rosie Middleton
PAWS for Thought Counselling