



Health and safety policy

Accidents and incidents –

- ✚ All accidents and incidents are recorded via a report and recorded in the accident log. For sessions including Children and Young People, the parents will be informed before leaving the farm and followed by email. All reports are filed and stored in line with GDPR regulations.
- ✚ Rosie Middleton will follow the necessary guidelines which include RIDDOR protocols when necessary.

Assessment process –

- ✚ Before Animal Assisted Therapy sessions are agreed, a thorough assessment process is completed to ensure client/ animal compatibility.
- ✚ A referral form is sent out to gain general information around experience with animals, allergies, fears and phobias and any history of violence towards animals.
- ✚ Clients then come out to visit the farm, have a look around, see the facilities and meet the animals. This also allows opportunity to see how clients engage with the different animals. It is down to Rosie Middleton's discretion, as to whether Animal Assisted Therapy is suitable for each individual. Animal welfare and client safety is my upmost priority.
- ✚ Farm visits are not limited to Animal Assisted Therapy sessions. All clients are welcome to have a face-to-face consultation, before committing to sessions.

Building/ site checks –

- ✚ Regular checks are made to the buildings, fencing and areas of work to ensure all clients are safe when attending sessions.
- ✚ Handwash and changing facilities are available onsite and kept clean and tidy.
- ✚ First aid kits are available onsite, the First Aider for PAWS for Thought Counselling is Rosie Middleton.
- ✚ All clients are aware of the Fire Assembly point in Shepherds hut field and the end of the drive. This will also be documented in the working agreement.

Farm hazards –

- ✚ PAWS for Thought Counselling is based on a working farm, so there may be machinery in operation when onsite. We work using a thumbs up system, to ensure client safety, this is discussed before sessions commence. If we see any farm machinery being operated, we need to wait, be acknowledge and be given the thumbs up. This ensures that we have been seen and the operator will allow us to carry on.
- ✚ There is a pond onsite in one of the fields. A life ring is based at the side of the water for safety purposes.
- ✚ For safety and insurance purposes, no clients will be left unattended onsite. For any clients who have made alternative arrangements to travel to the farm e.g. receiving a lift or catching the bus with another person, they need to make sure they remain in their vehicle, or go offsite for the duration of the session.



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- ✚ **Under no circumstances other people should not be walking around the farm unattended – Should this happen, you will be asked to leave the property.**
- ✚ Risk assessments are completed for activities on the farm, which cover necessary risks such as machinery and other livestock. This is then read and signed by the client before starting the session.

First Aid –

- ✚ Rosie Middleton holds relevant and up to date first aid training for adults and children. First aid kits are available around the farm should an incident arise. For sessions off the farm e.g. walk & talk, Rosie will always carry a first aid kit with her.
- ✚ First aid kits can be found inside the therapy room and the toilet block. Accident book is kept up to date and stored in line with GDPR regulations.

Manual handling –

- ✚ Clients are not required to undertake manual handling tasks of heavy items, this will be done by myself prior or after the session.

Risk Assessments –

- ✚ I carry out regular risk assessments for different activities that take place on the farm. A risk assessment is complete for each client who works with the animals. This is then sent to the parent/guardian to review and gain confirmation as to whether they are happy for the session to go ahead. This is then stored in the client's file under GDPR regulations.
- ✚ For walk & talk sessions, a risk assessment is created for each route, to be reviewed by the client prior to the session.

Smoking –

- ✚ Smoking is not permitted onsite

Weather conditions –

- ✚ Poor weather conditions can affect the behavior of the animals we work with, as well as the comfort of clients during sessions. Alternative plans may need to be made for days of bad weather, to ensure the session remains enjoyable for everyone.
- ✚ Red weather warnings – Your session will be cancelled and rearranged for an alternative day the same week, to ensure the safety of everyone onsite.
- ✚ Amber weather warnings – It is down to the client's discretion as to whether they feel safe enough to attend their session. Any session that does go ahead, these will be held indoors for safety reasons. Anyone who does not attend, we can rearrange your session for the same week.



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Animals:

Animal checks –

- ✚ Animal health is taken very seriously at PAWS for thought Counselling. All animals are checked regularly to ensure they are fit and healthy to participate in sessions.
- ✚ Rolo also received bi-annual health checks from the vet to ensure he is physically fit to practice.

Animal Medicines –

- ✚ Any animal medication is stored in a dedicated area on the farm. No clients will be left unattended during sessions and will not have access to areas containing animal medications.
- ✚ Any animal who have medicines administered will have this recorded in their individual health and medication log.

Animal Welfare –

- ✚ The principles expressed in DEFRA's The Five Freedoms remain at the core of all interactions with animals at PAWS for Thought Counselling.

Food for animals –

- ✚ All food that the animals eat must be provided by the farm. Clients are not allowed to bring their own food for the animals.

Suitability of animals –

- ✚ Animals are selected for their suitability for therapeutic work. Any training is done using positive reinforcement methods. Session lengths and frequency are restricted to ensure the needs of each individual animal are met.
- ✚ All animals can be unpredictable at times and they may react differently in various situations. All this is considered when preparing risk assessments for working with each of the animals.

Treatment of animal waste –

- ✚ Areas where sessions are held are poo picked regularly to prevent buildup of faeces. Indoor areas over the winter are cleaned weekly to ensure the sheep are living in a clean environment and can rest in comfort.
- ✚ Clients will not be involved in cleaning out the animals, this will be done by Rosie outside of sessions.

Unwell animals –

- ✚ Any animals who are sick, showing signs of illness, or who have recently given birth, pose a potential health risk to clients. Any animals who fit into this category will not be expected to work. Any animal that is unwell will receive the correct course of treatment and guided by a qualified vet.



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Zoonic diseases:

- ✚ Some potential infections may be carried by pets or livestock (i.e. Orf, Ringworm, toxoplasma) and there is also a possibility that skin infections could pass from humans to animals. To minimize these risks the animals, they receive regular checks and gain veterinary care as and when necessary for medical treatment, along with treatments for worms, fly strike etc. For the sheep that have any pour on treatments, they will be withdrawn for a period to ensure it is not transferred on to people's skin.
- ✚ Rolo receives regular worm and flea treatments and annual vaccinations. All the medicines that the animals receive will be documented in their animal health log.
- ✚ Clients are also made aware of the need to check their own health status before starting Animal Assisted Therapy sessions.
- ✚ For health and safety reasons, any clients who are pregnant will not be able to work with the sheep during lambing season.

Clients:

Allergic reactions –

- ✚ Some clients may have an allergic reaction to fur/dander/pollen/hay dust and other allergens within the farm environment. This information is gathered during the assessment process and captures this information prior to starting sessions.

History of abuse towards animals –

- ✚ The assessment process tries to establish if a participant has a history of abuse towards animals, or other people, this information is gathered through a referral form and further discussions. If I have any concerns around animal handling and safety, the client will be unable to undertake Animal Assisted Therapy sessions. The safety and wellbeing of all clients and animals is my upmost priority.

Fears and phobias –

- ✚ The assessment process establishes whether potential clients have any fears of phobias of anything they may come across when coming for sessions at the farm. It's important that all clients feel safe when attending sessions and necessary adjustments can be made.



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Immunization –

- ✚ Immunization against tetanus is advised (but not essential) for those in regular contact with animals. This is down to each client's discretion.

Minor wounds –

- ✚ For any minor wounds such as puncture wounds and significant bites or scratches, first aid will be administered and treated onsite through a trained first aider. Parents and guardians will be informed and advised to visit their GP surgery.
- ✚ All incidents will be recorded in the incident log

Personal Protective Clothing/Equipment –

- ✚ Details of suitable footwear and other clothing are discussed with clients at their face to face consultation, as well as written in the outdoor working agreement, signed ahead of sessions commencing.
- ✚ Suitable clothing included sturdy footwear such as walking boots or wellies, warm/ waterproof coat, and restricting jewellery to prevent getting lost/ damaged or causing harm to the animals.
- ✚ If clients come unsuitably dressed for the activity, the session cannot go ahead.

Slips, trips and falls –

- ✚ This can be a common cause of minor injury and all clients are encouraged to take care of and take responsibility for their own behavior whilst on site, especially in wet, slippery, muddy or icy conditions. This is discussed in the face-to-face consultation session, along with a signed agreement that the young person is safe to work on a 1:1 basis.
- ✚ On days of bad weather, clients are reminded at the start of each Session that we need to be mindful of our surroundings to minimize slips trips and falls. All clients are given the option as to whether we work inside or outside.
- ✚ Appropriate footwear and other suitable clothing is a requirement for all outdoor sessions – If clients come unsuitably dressed, the session cannot go ahead for safety reasons.

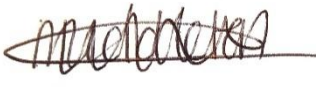
Supervision –

- ✚ All interactions between clients and animals will be supervised at all times. Despite rigorous risk assessments clients may sometimes behave unpredictably or act in negative ways towards animals.
- ✚ If the Counsellor has any concerns around Client or animal safety due to behavior, the animals will be removed from the session.



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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