



About the assessment

- The assessment takes around 45 minutes and enables us to check that your pet is fit and healthy, sociable and calm, and will behave appropriately on PAT visits.
- Our trained PAT Assessors make sure the process is fair and consistent.
- Please remember that PAT visits can be tiring for pets – you're asking them to go to new places, meet lots of people and sometimes deal with warm rooms, slippery floors, stairs, lifts... It's not for every pet, and that's okay!
- Note that the assessment needs to take place at a public location, not at your home.



Cats should:

Walk on a relaxed lead without excessive pulling, using a collar or harness and static lead

Why? PAT Cats must be kept on a lead at all times. They should be comfortable with this and walk nicely.

Be confident in new surroundings

Why? It's important that PAT Cats are confident and comfortable when taken to somewhere new so they can enjoy their visits.

Enjoy physical interaction with new people of all ages and relax while having their paws, tail and ears handled

Why? PAT Cats will meet many new people while on PAT visits, and many people will instinctively want to stroke or hold them. PAT Cats should be happy and confident with this.

Take a treat gently

Why? People love to be able to give their PAT Cat a treat and it's important the cat takes it gently. Some care home residents and hospital patients may have very fragile skin which can damage easily.

Respond appropriately to a sudden noise or disturbance in a room

Why? PAT Cats will encounter lots of new and unexpected stimuli – they should not be overly fearful of this and recover quickly.

Not use their claws when being held or while on a person's lap

Why? Claws can cause injury to those holding the cat. Older people and those who are immune compromised are more susceptible to infection.



Handlers should:

Demonstrate they can lead their cat in a controlled manner

Why? PAT Cats must be comfortable and relaxed on a collar or harness and static lead and listen to your direction.

Present their cat in a fit, clean and healthy condition

Why? Visiting can be tiring; it is important that your cat is fit and healthy and visits do not have an adverse effect on your pet's health. You will be meeting many people during a visit, and for hygiene reasons it's imperative your cat is clean and their nails are trimmed.

Understand the purpose of a PAT visit

Why? PAT visits are all about creating everyday moments of magic. We visit schools, hospitals, care homes and community groups to bring the comfort, companionship and joy of a therapy pet visit to those who need it most. Visits should not be made to your workplace or at the detriment of your pet. PAT Pets are not assistance, support or emotional support pets.

Always watch their pet's body language and know what it means

Why? It is important you recognise when your cat is feeling stressed, tired or unhappy. If you have any concerns about their welfare, you should confidently stop for a break or end your visit if necessary.

Be able to restrain your cat when necessary

Why? During PAT visits you may need to restrain or move your cat quickly. It's important that you can do this and your cat accepts it without a negative reaction.

Be happy and confident to represent Pets As Therapy

Why? PAT visits bring much joy, and people will look forward to seeing you, as well as your pet. We want you to be happy to speak to everyone you meet.

Assessors are asked to make a note of any other behaviours they observe throughout the assessment, for example, licking, stress behaviour, straining to escape – these are not acceptable on PAT visits.

Common reasons for deferral

Sometimes cats are deferred following an assessment, but please don't worry, this just means your cat isn't quite ready to be a PAT Pet. You will be invited to be reassessed at a time recommended by your Assessor or PAT Head Office.

Below are the main reasons why cats are deferred, which you may find useful to consider before arranging an assessment for your cat – if your cat shows these behaviours perhaps you need to wait a little longer before applying to be a volunteer. Deferrals are discussed and considered very carefully by PAT – if it's agreed there is an unacceptable risk to anyone or the cat on a PAT visit, your pet will be deferred.

Pulling or uncomfortable on the lead – Cats will be deferred if they pull on their lead or struggle to escape their collar or harness. This indicates the cat is stressed and the handler does not have full control.

Trying to escape – Cats must be comfortable in new and unfamiliar surroundings, without trying to escape or leave the room. They should also be confident to leave their travel carrier when initially arriving.

Unhappy to interact – PAT Cats are approached by many strangers of all ages and abilities. It is important cats are happy and enjoy this interaction and do not find it stressful.

Vocalising – Cats that meow excessively, growl or hiss will be deferred. These behaviours can indicate the cat is stressed or anxious.

Claws – Claws should always be in a retracted position when a cat is being held or on a lap, and the cat should not use their claws to hold or knead. When extended, a cat's claws can cause injury and may carry bacteria that pose a risk of infection.

Licking – A cat's mouth can carry bacteria and many cats naturally carry *Pasteurella multocida* that is transmittable to humans by licking. Cats will be deferred if they lick excessively.

Not socialised – Cats should be well socialised in a variety of locations and venue types. Most cats are comfortable in their own home, or another home environment meeting strangers, but it is important that cats are comfortable in new, strange environments outside of the home, and are happy to meet and interact with strangers of all ages. Behaviours such as biting or aggression are undesirable from a PAT Cat and will result in your application failing.



PAT welcomes calm, friendly, confident pets that enjoy interacting with new people and show no aggression or stress. Pets must be healthy, well-behaved and able to manage visits of up to two hours.

PAT Pets As Therapy

To book an assessment for your cat, please visit MyPAT. If you need any additional help, contact PAT Head Office.
info@petsastherapy.org • 01865 671440