



The Pets As Therapy Temperament Assessment

You and your pet will be assessed as a team, the assessment will last approximately 45 minutes and is to evidence the behaviours and temperament required. Assessors are trained to conduct the test in such a way that these behaviours are assessed fairly and consistently.

Visiting can be tiring and stressful for the pet, seeing many people in a novel environment. They may be visiting in a warm room with limited manoeuvrability, floors may be slippery, there may be a lot of walking or stairs and lifts to get to your visit location. Sadly, not all pets are suited to becoming a PAT dog but we know they make amazing pets and companions for their owners.

Please note that your assessment will NOT be carried out at your home address, it will be held in a neutral environment for you and your pet.

Dogs should

Walk on a relaxed lead, without excessive pulling and without the use of check chains or restraining equipment. The use of Head Collars must be approved by PAT Head Office

Why? PAT dogs must be held on their lead at all times and walk nicely, without relying on the use of training or behaviour correction aids.

Enjoy being stroked and handled including having their paws, tail and ears checked by the assessor. **Why?** PAT dogs should enjoy attention and interactions with new people, of all ages. They need to not be overly worried about having their paws, ears, or tail handled.

Take a treat gently without snatching from the assessor.

Why? Patients and clients love to be able to give their PAT dog a treat. It is important that they do not snatch it because some patients, such as older people have very fragile skin.

Respond appropriately to a sudden noise or disturbance in the room whilst being tested.

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

Respond calmly when being restrained

Why? PAT dogs need to be able to accept restraint in case of an emergency or if the handler needs to move their dog quickly.

Handlers should

Demonstrate their dog can wait patiently and quietly on their lead whilst holding a conversation with the assessor

Why? Much of the volunteer's time is spent talking to different people and PAT dogs need to be able to wait patiently and not be demanding of attention.

Groom their dog's back, chest, stomach and tail.

Why? Many people enjoy grooming a pet and it is an important part of some visits.

Present their dog in a fit, clean and healthy condition.

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

Understand the purpose of a PAT visit

Why? PAT visits bring much joy, those you visit will look forward to seeing you as well as your pet. Visits should not be made to your work place or at the detriment of your pet.

Identify your pets needs

Why? It is important that you know what your dog needs are and what they are trying to communicate. When they are stressed, tired or unhappy, you should be confident to stop for a break or end your visit where necessary.

Assessors are asked to make note of any other behaviours that they may observe throughout the assessment, for example: jumping up, pawing, or licking. Such behaviours are not acceptable on Pets As Therapy visits

Please see the next page for the main reasons why dogs are deferred following assessments

Reasons for Deferral

Sometimes, dogs are deferred following assessment, you will be invited to be re assessed at a time recommended by your Assessor or PAT Head Office.

Below are the main reasons why dogs are deferred, which you may find useful to consider before presenting your dog for assessment. Deferrals are discussed and considered very carefully by the Charity - where there is considered to be an unacceptable risk to the clients/patients that we are visiting, the dog will be deferred.

Jumping up - Jumping up is the main reason why dogs are deferred. The assessor is asked to note whether the dog jumps up, at whom (assessor or handler) and how many times. Jumping up is not allowed because of the danger of causing injury.

Pawing, or putting paws up - Dogs will be deferred if they put up one or both paws, or offer a paw to either the assessor or handler. Pawing can cause considerable injury, particularly to elderly people who have very thin skin and the slower and poorer rates of healing in older people increase the risk of infection.

Pulling on the lead - Dogs will be deferred if the assessor notes that they pull strongly or are erratic on their lead. This behaviour indicates that the dog is not under the handler's full control.

Reluctance/backing away when being fussed - If the dog displays any signs of stress or are reluctant to engage with others, for example, backing away or struggling to get away, they will be deferred because such behaviours suggest a dog that is unwilling or unable to accept interactions or attentions from strangers.

Not socialised with all groups - Dogs must be happy and confident around people of all ages, from babies to the elderly.

Vocalisations, such as barking or growling - Dogs that bark during the test will be deferred as barking can be indicative of anxiety or discomfort, or another unacceptable behaviour, for example, attention-seeking behaviour toward the handler.

Mouthing - Mouthing is an unacceptable behaviour due to the risk of injury to patients/clients. If your dog is an adult that is mouthing it may result in a failure, this means you will not be able to continue with your application.

Licking - Licking is not accepted because it is unhygienic and may present a risk of infection to clients. Licking can also be a sign of stress or anxiety that a dog displays when it is uncomfortable with a particular situation.

Taking food greedily - Snatching food so that the assessor can feel the dog's teeth is not accepted due to the possible risk of injury to the client/patient if the dog is offered food whilst on a visit. Continually using treats as a way of keeping your pet focused or under control is also unacceptable.

Behaviours such as biting or aggression are undesirable from a PAT Dog and will result in your application failing.

Considering if your dog may perform any of these behaviours during the test may be a useful indicator of whether they are ready for assessment or they would benefit from a little more time.

**For further information regarding your assessment, please contact the Pets As Therapy
Head Office, Email: info@petsastherapy.org Tel: 01865 671440**