



# Health and Safety Policy

For: Managers/ Staff / Clients / Service Users

Sarah Urwin Therapy Services have a separate **Infection Control Policy** which covers matters associated with health and hygiene, **Fire Policy & Procedures**, **COSHH policy & assessments** and **Lone Working Policy**.

## General:

**Accidents and Incidents** including near misses – All accidents and incidents must be reported and recorded in the Accident log. The Health and Safety lead is Sarah Urwin and HSE guidelines are followed including RIDDOR protocols, where and when necessary.

**Assessment process/Pre-session visits** – A robust assessment process is in place and pre-session visits are welcomed, when clients can meet the animals, get a feel for the environment and see if it is going to suit them.

**Building/site checks** – Prior to sessions each day, buildings, fencing, gates and work areas are checked for safety. Appropriate notices, guidelines and signage are displayed. Handwash and changing facilities are kept clean. First Aid kits are clearly visible and clients are informed that the lead First Aider and Health & Safety person on site is Sarah Urwin. The Accident Log is easily available at each session. All clients are told about the Fire Assembly point in the car park.

**COSHH** – The only products kept in the main yard are organic or natural medicines and cleaning products which are kept in a locked medicine chest together with the relevant individual product assessment record sheets. We have a COSHH folder which includes the COSHH policy and a list of individual assessment record sheets. We follow RIDDOR protocols.

**Farm hazards** – There are no slurry pits, accessible farm machinery, rivers or streams on the smallholding. The only water hazards are 3 animal drinking troughs in the main yard which are in full view of staff during sessions. The electric fence is switched off during sessions. There is no exposure to biohazards as no chemicals are kept in the area of the farm used by clients.

**First Aid** - A minimum of 1 member of staff on site must hold relevant up to date first aid training. Similarly a minimum of 1 staff member in a session must hold a current first aid certificate. Appointed first aiders names are displayed in office and main yard.

A clearly labelled First Aid kit is kept in the office and also in the main yard (tack room area). The Accident Book is kept in the office and kept up to date. Mobile phones are carried by staff leading sessions. See Infection Control & COSHH policy.

**Food/picnics** – If clients wish to eat or drink on site they can do so in several dedicated indoor and outdoor spaces which are well away from the animal accommodation and have washing facilities nearby.



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**Manual handling** - Clients are not required to manually handle any feeds or other heavy items. The only manual handling done on site is done by delivering company staff.

**Risk Assessments** - We carry out regular risk assessments for all the activities that take place at Youngs Farm and also for each individual client who works with the animals on the farm. These risk assessments are held on individual client files but a template is attached to this policy for information.

**Smoking** – No smoking is allowed anywhere on the premises at any time.

**Weather conditions** – Prevailing weather conditions often affect the behaviour of animals, as well as the comfort of clients, and these are taken into consideration before sessions start. Adjustments may need to be made to session plans in certain circumstances.

## Animals:

**Animal checks** - Prior to sessions each day the health of all animals is carefully checked.

**Animal Medicines** – Are stored in a locked medicine chest and are only dispensed by staff who then record details in the Medicines Log.

**Animal Welfare** – The principles expressed in DEFRA's **The Five Freedoms**, David Mellor's **5 Domains Model** and HETI's **Equine Welfare Principles** are core to all interactions with animals at Youngs Farm.

**Food for animals** – Clients are not allowed to feed any animals titbits or treats at Youngs Farm. All food for the animals is provided by the farm.

**Suitability of animals** – Animals are selected for their suitability for this type of work. Any training is done using positive re-enforcement methods, as advocated by the International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organisations. Session lengths and their frequency are restricted to take into account the needs of each individual animal. A risk assessment is carried out for each animal in the programme with particular reference to their natural temperament and the way they handle stressful situations. All animals can be un-predictable at times and they may react in different situations. All this is considered when preparing risk assessments and covered fully in our Animal Welfare Policy.

**Treatment of animal waste** – Animal contact areas are always kept free from a build up of faeces and urine, and cleaning and disinfecting is carried out on a regular basis, at least once a week. On the very rare occasions that clients, supervises or students become involved with the disposal of faeces and other waste they will wear appropriate PPE including rubber gloves and overalls.



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**Unwell animals** – animals who are sick, showing signs of illness, or who have recently given birth, pose a potential health risk to humans. All animals in this group are housed away from the main yard and will not come into contact with clients until they have fully recovered and been checked by our vet.

**Visiting or new animals** – No animal from another farm or programme is allowed on the premises, to reduce the risk of disease transmission. When introducing new animals they are kept completely separately for at least 4 weeks before being introduced into the programme.

**Zoonoses** – 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. In order to minimise these risks regular vet visits are scheduled every 3/6 months and clients are also made aware of the need to check their own health status before sessions commence.

## Clients/Service Users:

**Allergic reactions** – Some participants may have an allergic reaction to fur/dander/pollen/hay dust and other allergens in the farm environment. The assessment process captures this information prior to starting sessions and arranges for the necessary medicines, or physical precautions (i.e masks) to be taken or easily available where needed. Clients with PRN medical arrangements would only be accepted if accompanied by a support worker responsible for their medication.

**History of abuse** - The assessment process tries to establish if a participant has a history of abuse towards animals, or other people. There is some research evidence to suggest that where clients have been abused by others, there may be a link to them abusing animals, or other people. Again the 'line of sight' rule applies.

**Immune Deficiency** – Some participants may have challenged or compromised immune systems, particularly if they have just undergone a detox programme. This may also be the case for some clients who self-injure or have eating disorders. The assessment process captures this information prior to starting sessions. This may result in sessions with the animals being delayed until a client's immune system is robust enough to cope with the risks posed by the animals and the farm environment. Other options will be explored to observe animals for a period of time, without direct touch, to reduce the risks of infection.

**Immunisation** – Immunisation against tetanus is advised for those in very regular contact with the animals. See also Zoonoses (above)

**Minor wounds** – Puncture wounds and significant bites or scratches are referred to the local GP surgery, New Valley Practice in Crediton, without delay and subsequently recorded in the Accident Book. For more minor wounds First Aid kits are located in all the main areas and a trained First Aider is on site at all times.



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## **Personal Protective Clothing/Equipment –**

Details of suitable footwear and other clothing are discussed with clients at their initial visit to the farm and include providing their own robust footwear, warm and waterproof coats, and over-trousers where necessary, and also restricting jewellery as far as possible.

Riding hats that comply with current standards are provided if required but are not mandatory as all work takes place on the ground. Rubber and other protective gloves are provided in a range of sizes. Face masks are readily available. One piece overalls in a range of sizes are also available if required. See also Treatment of Animal Waste (above).

**Slips, trips and falls** – Are the most common cause of minor injury and all clients are encouraged to take care and take responsibility for their own behaviour whilst on site, especially in wet, slippery, muddy or icy conditions. This is discussed in full at the assessment and contracting stages and clients are reminded at the start of each session and especially when weather conditions are demanding. Appropriate footwear and other suitable clothing is also a requirement for sessions.

**Supervision** - All interactions between participants and animals will be supervised and animals and clients will be kept within 'line of sight' by the practitioner working with them at all times. Despite rigorous risk assessments clients may sometimes behave unpredictably or act in negative ways towards animals hence the line of sight rule.

**Policy Reviews** - All elements of this Health & Safety policy are regularly review, at least annually, but sometimes more often.

Signed:

Date:

31.08.22