



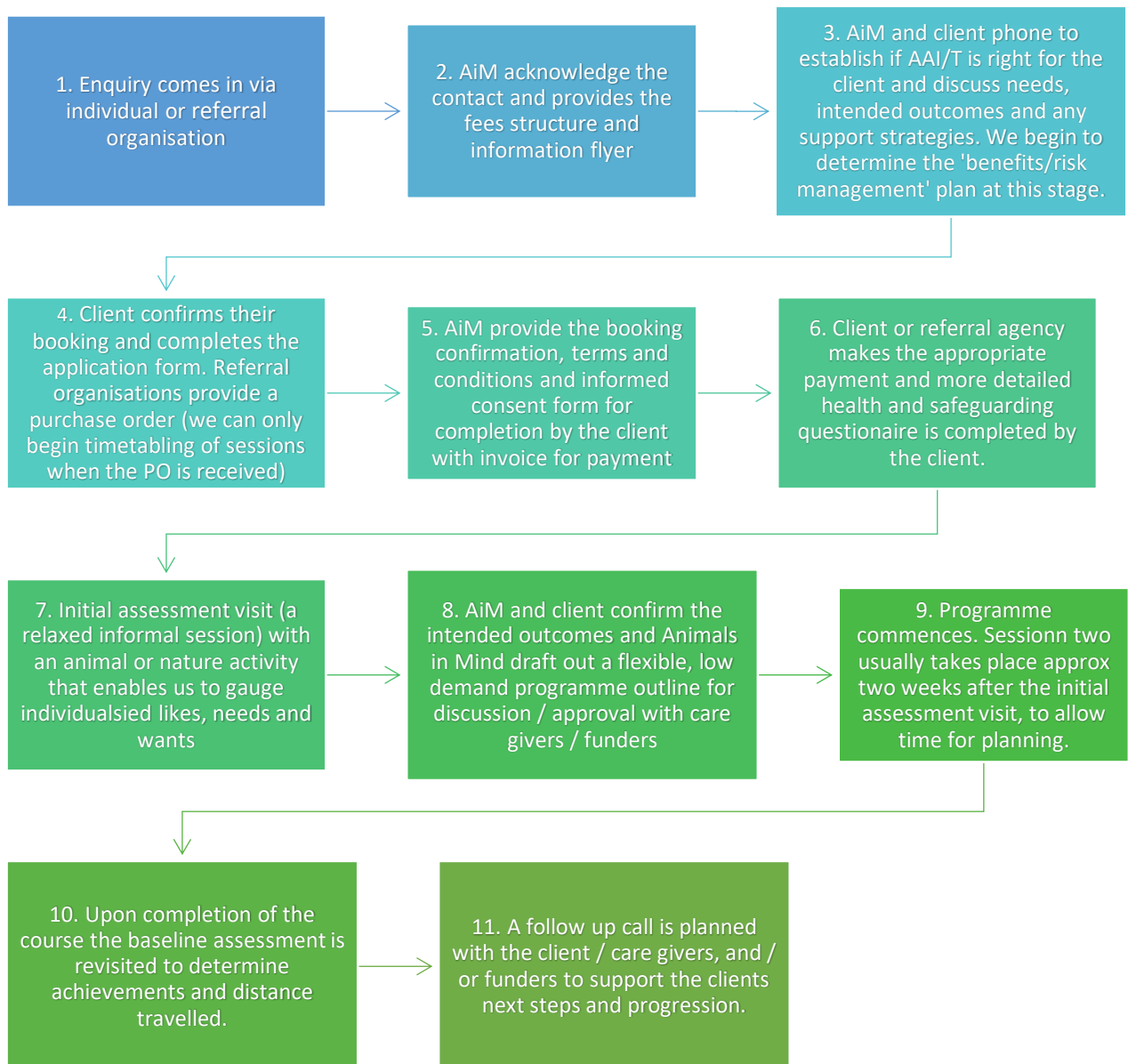
Welcome to Animals in Mind® Animal-Assisted Therapy and Education

The Client Journey Explained

2023

Overview

The process outlines below is designed to show the client or funder the stages prior to commencing sessions with AiM. The process is designed to protect the client and ensure that AAI/T or Alternative Education is right for them and to ensure all necessary safeguarding and risk management processes are in place. It puts the health, well-being, safety, and interests of the client at the heart of the process.



Number of sessions

Most 1-1 AAT/I activities take place across a number of regular sessions, usually lasting between six and 15 weeks. We can provide a guide to the number of sessions but advise caution over the expectation of linear results and no two clients are alike. Interventions for clients recovering from burn-out, anxiety and low mood benefit from a longer series of sessions. Some clients utilising funding from EOTAS (Education other than at school) personal budgets for longer term sessions, so please do ask if you would like support with the details of how AAI/T might support the persons development. At AiM we will always make sure sessions are totally client centred and reduce / cease sessions as or where necessary.

Initial Assessment Visit (stage 7)

Whilst most stages of the client journey are self-explanatory, the initial assessment visit is the stage most clients want to know more about. It is part of the induction phase and vital for us in planning safe and effective sessions that are client centred.

- a. **Purpose** – Initial Assessment is informal and its purpose is to establish how Animal Assisted Interventions / Therapy or Alternative Education might work best for the client. It is a short meeting for us to establish, likes, wants, and needs and importantly to determine which therapy animal(s) or nature-based activities might be best suited to the client. This session also intends to build the relationship with the client and build trust in the Practitioner and the Animal(s). This first session is also vital to establish any safety mechanism for the animals. (e.g. a person with restricted mobility or dexterity, might need additional support to ensure animals are safely interacted with).
- b. **Duration and location** – This can be with us on-site, but quite often we can do this first initial assessment activity in the clients home / education or care setting for the first session
- c. **Typical activities** depend on the age and needs of the client. With young prospective clients, or extremely nervous clients we may arrive with pictures of our animals to show and gauge responses. In older children, (once we know if there are any risks), we may bring animals for a short introduction. It is important that stages 1-6 of the flow diagram above are in place before the initial assessment visit as this enables us to plan for the session and to carry out specific risk assessment. An important part of initial assessment is to establish trust and start to build the relationship between client / AAI/T practitioner and the animal assistant.
- d. There will usually be up to two weeks post initial assessment visit before any first session is carried out, so that we have the time to plan for the activities and agree any potential goals etc.

Planning any intended learning outcomes (stages 8)

Following the initial assessment visit, we gather all the information from the application, the health questionnaire, and the EHCP (if present) to draft out possible learning outcomes for approval. Please note, this needs to be seen as a 'flexible guide' as the sessions are context are person-centred' and particularly in early weeks cannot be too rigid or fixed, particularly with our clients with ASD, anxiety, recovering from burn-out, where sessions need to be 'demand free' and highly organic and fluid. Care givers may not wish to set any intended outcomes, which we

are more than happy to work with. Local authorities and funding agencies may prefer some outcomes to be determined to measure the impact of the intervention and the allocated funding. We can do this through the application phases and baseline assessment or utilise a baseline and impact measure of your own choice.

[On-programme review](#)

During the programme, we will keep all essential parties up to date with progress via discussion and reports, in line with the schedule provided at the time of booking.

[Post intervention / programme evaluation](#)

At the end of the series of sessions, we ask care givers / parents and or commissioners to revisit with us the baseline assessment questionnaire and review any objectives planned. We then use this information to help signpost the client to next steps and possible progressions.