



ANIMAL ASSISTED INTERVENTION (AAI) / ANIMAL ASSISTED EDUCATION (AAE) / ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS GENERIC RISK ASSESSMENT 2022-2023

Risk	Who is at risk?	What controls are in place?
Bites/Scratches	The client / Animal Steward	<p>Supervision by Animal Steward of all interactions with the animals. Correct handling (where carried out) is demonstrated, observed, and practiced. Animal behaviour is monitored and acted upon, via split attention and only one animal with a client at a time. Animals with known behavioural issues are not used. The Therapist / Animal Steward (Lynn) has expertise and qualifications in Animal Behaviour, and can use 'split attention' to adjust any interaction that might lead to adverse reaction by an animal.</p> <p>Where snakes form part of any activity, these are non-venomous and chosen for their docile nature. Hand washing facilities must be available. Medical advice will be sought if necessary.</p>
Allergies	The Client / Animal Steward, or Staff Assisting	<p>Animal therapists / stewards should be made aware in advance of anyone with allergies to animals (including bees/wasps) or nuts. Most animals are short-haired. Access to loose hay is considered prior to each client interaction, on a person-centred basis (related to allergies). There are currently no animals at Animals in Mind, who eat nuts, but some seed eaters may need to be avoided and done so on a client, by client basis. Clients with eczema, dermatitis or other skin condition that might be aggravated by alcohol-based hand gels will be asked to use soap and water instead, or if preferred latex free medical gloves. Restorative hand creams can be provided for use after washing / use of gels.</p>
Phobias	The Clients or Staff supporting the client	<p>Phobias should be discussed with the therapist / animal steward prior to booking but will also be observed during dynamic risk-assessment. When multiple animals are incorporated into the intervention / education, Clients are given warning before an animal is brought out so they can move away, chose not to handle. Activities with the snake and tarantula can be done without getting close to the animals if necessary. Phobias are treated with empathy and dignity by the therapist, and peer-pressure is not permitted. Gradual and systematic exposure can be used to increase the Clients confidence, IF overcoming the phobia is a goal or personal choice.</p>



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<p>Zoonotic / Infectious Disease</p>	<p>The Clients, the Animal Steward and Staff supporting the client</p>	<p>Strict hygiene briefing included for the animal steward, and clients in all activities. Eating and drinking during animal interventions is not permitted. Pregnant clients will not be permitted to handle reptiles (Salmonella risk).</p> <p>Clients are told about the importance of not eating or touching their faces during and after handling the animals until they have washed their hands. This often forms part of the transferable goals linked to goals of 'personal independent personal hygiene. Hand washing facilities must be available and all hands must be washed after handling the animals. Anti-bacterial hand-gels are utilised frequently between animals, but are not a substitute for correct hand-washing.</p> <p>Animals attending the event are checked daily and assessed for health prior to use. Animals are vaccinated (where vaccinations are required and advised by our vet). Animals are checked / treated for external parasites such as ticks, lice and fleas and treated accordingly. Non rescue Animals are sourced from captive bred stock and not wild-caught sources, reducing the risk of disease and ensuring ethical conservation practices are considered.</p> <p>Ground sheets, and furniture coverings are used when animals are travelling to site, so that animals do not come into contact with on-site floor coverings. Animal housing (permanent and temporary) is regularly disinfected (DEFRA / species approved) and fresh bedding supplied. Any animal waste produced on event sites, is cleaned up quickly, this is not disposed of on visitation sites, but is double bagged and taken away / disposed of in line with our animal waste disposal policy (evidenced via Local Authority Licensing Inspector). Children volunteers under the age of 14 are not permitted to deal with animal waste.</p> <p>Animal feed is purchased from credible sources with high storage standards, and feed bins have sealed lids to prevent cross contamination. The Animals in Mind Director monitors DEFRA guidelines in relation to disease control and topical outbreaks and take preventative measures (e.g., Bird Flu notifications).</p>
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		The animals that assist in AAE/AAI can not transmit Covid-19 (see separate Covid-19 Risk Assessment).
Fire / ignition of materials	The Clients, the Animal Steward and Staff supporting the client, Members of the public	Fire exits at venues to be noted and kept clear. Fire evacuation procedures noted, including the safe evacuation of animals. Wires are kept away from animals and clients. Trailing wires are not permitted. Combustible materials are not used on site. Electrical equipment, such as heat mats are kept flat in storage and annually PAT tested, when over 12 months old.
Slips, Trips, and falls	The Clients, the Animal Steward and Staff supporting the client, Members of the public	Animals are contained in small enclosures during activities and not permitted loose, unless in a controlled environment to prevent slips and trips. Any spilt fluids are cleaned immediately and cleaned with disinfectant wipes. Animal stewards and therapists set up areas to ensure equipment does not cause trip hazards. If AAE/AAI takes place at the Therapists home / animal setting, this is 1-1, and additional risk assessment carried out linked to the client(s) mobility and needs.
Child/vulnerable adult protection	The Clients, Children, Care residents	All staff and volunteers (over 18 yrs) are enhanced DBS checked. AiM Therapist / Steward attends all sessions in branded uniforms, carrying identification, and copies of our DBS. The DBS can be checked directly on the DBS online checking service free of charge by those booking / approving the service. AiM Animal Steward / Therapist follow CQC expected care standards and procedures and wear visitor lanyards when required in schools / care settings. In 1-1 sessions, where the Client is unaccompanied in the therapists home, all sessions are recorded, using a body-worm camera. This serves the purpose of review by the therapist for goal achievement and progression, and for celebrating achievement with the client / the clients approved carer / guardian (where permitted). The footage can serve to safeguard the therapist and the client.

Written by Lynn Hart	Date: 13 th May 2022	Expected date for update: 13 th May 2023
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