

Title of Document	<b>Working with Pets</b>
Name of Department	<b>Operations</b>

What type of document is this?	<b>Policy</b>		
Which Helping Hands POL/SOP/W.I does this document relate to?	N/A	Reference number of POL/SOP/W.I	N/A

Which Operational Priority/Priorities does this document link to?	Governance Framework	Superior Client Care	People, Performance & Culture	Facilities & Sustainability
	Maximising Efficiency & Cost Management			

Custodian of document	Group Managing Director	Committee/Group responsible for this document	Policy Committee
Approval date and committee chairperson signature	29.10.24	When is its next scheduled review?	29.10.27

Who does it apply to?	All Helping Hands staff					
	Does it apply to bank workers?	Yes	Does it apply to agency staff?	Yes	Does it apply to third party contractors?	Yes

Purpose of the Policy	To outline Helping Hands approach to working with pets; enabling our customers to live longer at home whilst ensuring the safety of both our staff, customers, and members of public as much as reasonably possible.
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## Key Health & Safety Policy Requirements

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibility
Senior Leadership	To advocate the importance of employee safety's importance to our vision to help more people live longer at home.
Operations Management	To address unsafe behaviour in line with performance management, or disciplinary processes as appropriate. To identify and reduce risks where present. To lead on customer communications, setting and reviewing risk assessments, and to support subordinates in addressing difficult situations. To ensure due diligence is completed before delivering care.
All Operations Staff	To adhere to this policy. To raise Health and Safety concerns where identified. To take reasonable care of their own safety and others. To follow mitigations set out in customer support plans and risk assessments. To cooperate fully in accident investigation as required.
Marketing Staff	To support this Standard Operating Procedure in communications, new business enquiries, and materials – Managing customer expectations and highlighting risk to Operators where applicable.

#### 1. About this policy

- 1.1. Supporting our customers with Pet Care enables them to live longer in their own home, with the comfort and companionship of beloved pets. We understand the impact this can have to our customers wellbeing, and the importance of our being able to support it effectively and safely to our service.
- 1.2. We acknowledge that working with and around animals is not without risk, primarily to our employees but also to the customer themselves and members of public.
- 1.3. This policy outlines guidance for our Operational, Marketing and New Business teams around the services we can offer, how we work safely, and what to do when safety is at risk.

#### 2. Services we offer and exclusions

- 2.1. As carers our primary focus is the needs of the customer. However, we can support the customer with some of their duties in taking care of their pet. These can include;
  - Feeding the pet
  - Cleaning cages or litter trays
  - Dog walking / Playing

- Running errands such as shopping for food or accompanying the customer and pet to appointments.

2.2. We are not animal care specialists, and can not offer specialist services such as;

- Administering medication / treatments
- Trimming claws
- Brushing teeth
- Grooming or washing
- Training

### **3. Customer responsibilities**

3.1. Customers have a responsibility to ensure;

- Animals have received the appropriate vaccinations and treatments, such as fleas or worms.
- The home is safe to work in and free of hazards
- Animals within their care are under control
- Provide equipment for requested activities

### **4. Employee responsibilities**

4.1. Employees have a responsibility to;

- Make line managers aware of any allergies, phobias or relevant medical conditions which affect their ability to support customers with Pet Care activities so alternative tasks can be planned. This should be discussed in the medical questionnaire, induction, and in supervisions or as soon as possible following a change.
- Make your line manager aware of risks being presented in the customers home, such as a new animal being introduced, an animal behaving aggressively or risk mitigations not being adhered to by the customer or lead contact.
- Report all incidents and accidents as per company policies and procedures
- Adhere to risk assessments which have been put in place by the line manager.
- Complete the activities as described in the support plan.
- Escalate requests for additional activities to your line manager.

### **5. Dangerous Animals**

5.1. **Aggressive animals**



5.1.1. Anyone who falls victim to an animal bite should seek medical attention as soon as possible, where they may be treated with antibiotics or vaccinations such as tetanus. The victim may choose to report the bite to the police, however this would be a civil matter between the victim and the owner.

5.1.2. We understand that animal attacks may not always be foreseeable and out of character for the animal. Where an animal has demonstrated aggressive behaviour there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of harm. Risk assessment should be reviewed and updated accordingly, and safety measures agreed with the customer and / or lead contact. This should be documented clearly in the support plan and all team informed.

5.1.3. Where risk assessment mitigations have not been followed by the customer, the Care Manager should inform the customer and lead contact that care will not be able to continue until risk assessment mitigations are adhered to. All communication should be documented.

5.1.4. Where risk assessment mitigations are still not being followed by the customer, the Care Manager should refer to the withdrawal of service policy.

5.1.5. Where risk assessment mitigations are not being followed by the employee, this should be addressed through appropriate performance management processes.

## 5.2. Banned Dog Breeds

5.2.1. As per the Dangerous Dogs Act there are several breeds which are illegal to own without a "Certificate of Exemption", neutering, microchipping and holding third party liability insurance. In the event a banned breed is identified in the customers home it is the responsibility of the Care Manager or Area Care Manager in their absence, to obtain evidence of all three documents before care can be provided. These breeds include (as of July 2024);

- Pit Bull Terrier
- Japanese Tosa
- Dogo Artentino
- Fila Brasileiro
- XL Bully

5.2.2. Exemption Certification demonstrates that the dog has been expertly assessed on its temperament and has no previous incidents, and that the owner has demonstrated they are responsible and fit to care for the dog.

5.2.3. Where care has already begun, and the customer has been unable to produce evidence of exemption, neutering and microchipping, we consider this evidence that

the situation poses a reasonably foreseeable risk to safety of Helping Hands staff.

5.2.4. In this instance the Care Manager should defer to the withdrawal of service policy.

5.2.5. Prior to commencement of services, it should be agreed that banned breed animals must be muzzled and kept on a lead or secured in another part of the house for the full duration of visits. This is a legal requirement outlined in the Dangerous Dogs Act.

### 5.3. Exotic, wild or poisonous animals

5.3.1. Dangerous or Wild animals are illegal to keep without a "Wild animal license" and third-party insurance. The same process applies as with Dangerous Dogs 5.2.

5.3.2. Owners of such animals are required to keep them in secure and adequate housing / tank, and they should not be freely wandering the home.

5.3.3. Exotic animals which do not require a license must be assessed as to any risk they may pose, and care of the animal is not within Helping Hands capabilities or expectations of staff.

## 6. Risk Assessment

6.1. Risk assessment should consider the following;

- Nature of the activities – What are we being asked to do?
- Hazardous substances involved – Such as cleaning products, cat litter or treatment chemicals for fish tanks etc.
- Risks of the animal – Can the animal bite, scratch, push / jump?
- Triggers for the animal – Does the animal become more stressed when you touch the customer, eat, clean its bed etc.
- Previous incident – has there been one?
- Safe disposal of waste
- Hygiene / sanitary risks
- PPE and equipment required
- Pregnancy – Pregnant employees should not change litter trays due to risk of toxoplasmosis.

6.2. See Appendix 1 for further guidance on risk assessment.

## 7. Bringing animals to work



- 7.1. As an equal opportunity employer, we aim to ensure all staff feel comfortable working in our offices, including those with allergies, phobias or fears of animals.
- 7.2. To reduce risk of harm to our employees and visitors, risk of damage to property, or discrimination (regards point 7.1), it is not permitted for staff to bring animals into Helping Hands offices.
- 7.3. The only exception to this is Assistance Dogs as defined by the Equality Act and does not extend to Emotional Support animals except where explicitly permitted and risk assessed through a documented reasonable adjustment request.
- 7.4. Assistance dogs allowed in the premises are expected to;
- Be highly trained
  - Not wander freely around the premises
  - Sit or lie quietly on the floor next to its owner and are trained to go to the toilet on command and so are unlikely to foul in a public place
  - Be instantly recognisable by the harness or identifying dog jacket they wear

## **8. FAQs and statements**

- 8.1. Are visiting customers dogs allowed in HH branches?
- 8.1.1. Yes. A customer bringing their dog out into public is responsible for keeping their dog under control, and the dog should be on a lead. The dog and customer should be welcomed into the “front-of-house” area only.
- 8.2. I have asked a customer to ensure the pet is secured during visits but this isn’t happening, what should I do?
- 8.2.1. Ensure you have communicated effectively and documented said communication. Refer to the Withdrawal of Care Policy.
- 8.3. A customer doesn’t have 3<sup>rd</sup> party insurance for their dog, what should I do?
- 8.3.1. Unless the dog is a banned breed, insurance is not a legal requirement. Document that the dog is not insured, and manage the risk based on the dogs behaviour.
- 8.4. The customer has an aggressive cat, should the cat be insured?
- 8.4.1. Cats cannot be insured as they legally have a “right to roam” and less practical to train than dogs.
- 8.5. One of my carers is allergic or uncomfortable with animals, but this makes it difficult for planning visits which include pet care. What can I do?

8.5.1. You should take all reasonable steps to ensure carers are not discriminated against with less shifts or excessive travel.

8.6. I have a customer who owns a banned breed and we are already delivering care without requesting documentation. What should I do?

8.6.1. Politely inform the customer our process has been updated in line with legislation and government guidance, and request evidence of the documentation.

8.7. How do I tell if a dog is a banned breed?

8.7.1. If you suspect a dog is a banned breed there are various guides online, additionally legally bred dogs will have papers which confirm the dogs breed.

- **UK Banned Dog Breeds List 2023 - Prohibited Breeds Explained | Yappily**
- **XL Bully conformation standard - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))**
- **Breed Standards : Tosa Ken | United Kennel Club (UKC) ([ukcdogs.com](http://ukcdogs.com))** (Japanese Tosa)
- **Breed Standards : American Pit Bull Terrier | United Kennel Club (UKC) ([ukcdogs.com](http://ukcdogs.com))**
- **Breed Standards : Dogo Argentino | United Kennel Club (UKC) ([ukcdogs.com](http://ukcdogs.com))**
- **225g02-en ([fci.be](http://fci.be))** (Fila Brasileiro / Brazilian Mastiff)

## TRAINING



<b>Is training required?</b>	No
<b>Details of training</b>	N/A

## COMPLIANCE

<b>How is compliance with the POL going to be monitored</b>	The policy will be updated when/if regulation or legislation should change. If process alters this may require a policy review, or should breach of policy/process or incident be identified
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## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

	Positive / Negative / N/A	Comments
Does the document have a positive or negative impact on one group of people over another on the basis of their:		
• age?	N/A	
• disability?	Positive	Acknowledges accommodation of support animals
• gender reassignment?	N/A	
• pregnancy and maternity (which includes breastfeeding)?	Positive	Acknowledges risks to pregnant mothers
• marriage and civil partnership	N/A	
• race (including nationality, ethnic or national origins or colour)?	N/A	
• religion or belief?	N/A	
• sex?	N/A	
• sexual orientation?	N/A	
If you have identified any potential impact (including any positive impact which may result in more favourable treatment for one particular group of people over another), are any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?	N/A	
If the impact on one of the above groups is likely to be negative:		
• Can the impact be avoided?	N/A	
• What alternatives are there to achieving the document's aim without the impact?	N/A	
• Can the impact be reduced by taking different action?	N/A	
• Is there an impact on staff, client or someone else's privacy?	N/A	

<b>What was the previous version number of this document?</b>	This is a new Policy	
<b>Changes since previous version</b>	N/A	
<b>Who was involved in developing/reviewing /amending the POL?</b>	Head of Property Operational and Planning Support Manager Quality Development Lead HSQE Business Partner	
<b>How confidential is this document?</b>	Internal	Can be shared freely within Helping Hands



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<b>References</b>	Health & Safety at Work Act (HASWA 1974) Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulation (COSHH) 2002 Risk Assessments – Management of Health & Safety at Work 1999 Regulations Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
<b>Associated Documents</b>	HHH-POL-057 - Control of Substances Hazardous to Health HHH-SOP-008 Accident, Incident and Near Miss Reporting Pregnancy risk assessment

## Appendix 1

### Risk Assessment

The following suggestions are recognised mitigations for common risks which may be applicable to the pet and home you are assessing. However, each case should be assessed individually and all factors considered.

Hazard	Worker Risk (Harm)	Available Controls
Animals, their faeces, and their food can carry such diseases as Salmonella, Campylobacter, Psittacosis, Campylobacteriosis, Tuberculosis Toxocara and Toxoplasma. Transmission can occur through aerosol ingestion, cross-contamination, or exposed wounds / tissue.	Sickness, pregnancy complications including fatality, death via organ damage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pregnant employees should not be asked to complete this activity</li> <li>Wear gloves, apron, facemask &amp; eye protection.</li> <li>Wash hands thoroughly after handling pets, faeces, food or possessions.</li> <li>Ensure waste is disposed of in the external bins and bagged securely to avoid spillage / contamination</li> <li>Ensure skin lesions, cuts, abrasions are adequately covered at all times</li> </ul>
Animals may attack out of territorial / possessive behaviour	Lacerations (bite / scratch)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure animals are secured in another room for the duration of the activity</li> <li>Document the animals favourite places to be / sit.</li> <li>Ensure you are aware of the animal's location before making physical contact with the owner</li> </ul>
Allergies / Phobias	Allergic reaction Increased stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure you are aware of employee's medical conditions and preferences before assigning work, and ensure they are not assigned to customers with pet care activities. This should not negatively impact the overall quantity of work allocated, which could be considered discrimination.</li> </ul>
Marinum infection, can be contracted via contact with aquarium contents / fish.	Skin lesions, bone and joint infections, death.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure you are aware of employee's medical conditions specifically related to compromised immune system, as this makes them more at risk of fatality if infected. Employees with compromised immune systems should not be allocated this activity.</li> <li>Wear full PPE including gloves, apron and facemask</li> </ul>
When walking a dog the dog may become distressed and attack a member of public or another dog	Lacerations (Bite / Scratch), insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep dog on shorter lead in busier areas</li> <li>Avoid busier areas</li> <li>Avoid passing other dogs if they are showing signs of nervousness</li> </ul>

	claim, criminal action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Avoid passing other dogs</li></ul>
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Controlled Document