

Hereford Community Farm CIC

Animal Care and Management Policy

Rationale

Hereford Community Farm CIC is an established provider of land based therapeutic activities and skills development for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. The service provided forms part of an integrated programme of support within education, health or social care and this may incorporate supervised interaction or activities involving animals to achieve specific outcomes.

Within this provision Hereford Community Farm CIC recognises the animals in its care as sentient beings and commits to the highest standards of animal care and management. It is recognised that the care and management of animals is a continually evolving process and whilst this document sets out the key principles there will be supporting documentation to cover specific activities, circumstances and situations and these will be added and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Animal Welfare

The key legislation underpinning this policy and procedures is the Animal Welfare Act 2006. Other relevant legislation;

- Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) Regulations 2018 with updated statutory guidance issued 1st February 2022.
- The Agricultural (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1968
- The Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations 2000
- Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006
- Disease Control (England) Order 2003
- Specific Identification & Movement legislation
- Sheep and Goats (Records, Identification, Movement) (England) Order 2009

Hereford Community Farm CIC will also ensure that the welfare needs of each animal are met through provision of;

- A suitable environment (the place in which an animal is kept)
- A suitable diet
- The opportunity to exhibit normal patterns of behaviour
- To be housed with, or apart from other animals (whichever is applicable)
- To be protected from pain, injury, suffering and disease

Social Farms & Gardens Code of Practice

Social Farms and Gardens are the lead body representing the Social Farming sector in the UK and provide guidance for social farming providers within a Code of Practice which is suitable for sites delivering commissioned and voluntary services including Green Care, Social and Therapeutic Horticulture and Animal Assisted Therapies. Hereford Community Farm CIC attends regular members meetings and is signed up for updates that reflect changes in commissioning, legislation and good practice.

<https://www.farmgarden.org.uk>

The Society for Companion Animal Studies (SCAS) Code of Practice

The Society for Companion Animal Studies is the lead UK body for all types of Human : Animal Interaction organisations and has produced a Code of Practice to inform all types of Animal Assisted Activities (AAA), Animal Assisted Therapies (AAT) and Animal Assisted Interactions (AAI). The Code was developed following extensive consultation within the sector and drawn together with a multi disciplinary team in response to a perceived lack of guidance for providers of AAA, AAT and AAI. This included representatives from scientific and veterinary backgrounds, national charities, established providers, representatives from the educational, health and social care sector, animal behaviourists and allied disciplines.

This is a voluntary code intended to offer guidance on good practice for delivering services effectively and safely, ensuring that the welfare needs of both humans and animals are met. The Code of Practice is organised in seven main sections:

- Participants
- Animals
- Programme Planning and Implementation
- Qualifications and training within the AAI delivery team
- Health and Safety
- Risk Assessments
- Ethical considerations

As a long standing member of SCAS Hereford Community Farm CIC remain committed to adhering to the principles of the Code of Practice and its implementation.

A copy of the SCAS Code of Practice is included supplementary to this document or can be viewed on the SCAS website;

<https://www.scas.org.uk>

Record Keeping

Records pertaining to Hereford Community Farm CIC animals are held in the Large Animal Record folder (Equines, sheep, goats) and the Small Animal Record folder (companion animals, rabbits, guinea-pigs, small rodents). A daily diary of large and small animal interactions and routine observations are used as working documents and to flag any issues with senior animal care staff or the Directors to action.

The Daily Register records all people on site at any time and is held in the main classroom and a weekly rota identifies people accessing different activities on a daily basis.

There is a comprehensive Health and Safety Policy folder, Policies and Procedures, Fire Safety and Risk Assessment file held in the main classroom.

Copies and extracts from these folders are included as reference.

Staffing

Hereford Community Farm CIC will ensure that all staff and volunteers who have a designated responsibility to look after or work with animals in the course of their role will be competent to do so and that they will adhere to the principles of The Animal Welfare Act.

(See Training Policy for further details)

Visitors and Clients

Any visitor or client who has contact or interactions with Hereford Community Farm CIC animals will be under supervision of animal care staff and such interactions will be strictly in accordance with Risk Assessment procedures (examples of which are provided and will be updated annually as a minimum). Such interactions or activities will be recorded using the Animal Activities and Interactions log sheets (example provided).

Appropriate signage in a range of formats will be displayed around the site to promote inclusivity including Easy Read or using the Traffic Light System used to reinforce key messages and facilitate understanding where people may have additional communication requirements (examples attached).

Risk assessment protocols are in place to promote safe working practice and to maintain the health and wellbeing of people and animals on the Hereford Community Farm CIC premises and across interactions and activities that take place.

- All visitors to the site will be in accordance with the risk assessment protocol Visitor Access and Movements on Site (copy provided)
- Pre booked school sessions or children and young people attending activities as part of a programme of study will be in accordance with the risk assessment protocol Alternative Education Provision (copy provided)
- Anyone involved in any interaction with Hereford Community Farm CIC animals will be required to adhere to generic risk assessment protocols in place including Animal Care General (which includes Biosecurity, infection transmission and zoonoses) and activity specific risk assessments for small and large animal handling (copies provided).

Pre booked and visiting groups will be provided with organisational guidance concerning Biosecurity measures, Covid Secure Risk Assessment, Preventative Measures Regarding E. Coli, Health and Safety Precautions for Pregnant Women and H.S.E. information - Avoiding ill health at open farms (copies provided).

Visitors Animals on Hereford Community Farm CIC Premises

Animals belonging to visitors will not usually be brought onto Hereford Community Farm CIC premises with the exception of recognised assistance animals.

Insurance

A copy of the certificate of Employers and Public Liability Insurance will be displayed in the main classroom;

Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance plc (Authorised Insurer)

Policy no: RKL23467/11/741/171 renewed annually on 25th November.

Fire Safety

A Fire Safety Risk Assessment has been completed a copy of which is available in the Fire Safety Risk Assessment file in the main classroom. An annual site inspection is carried out by Hereford Fire Protection Services Ltd and the Certificate of Inspection is displayed in the main classroom.

Emergency Evacuation Fire drills are carried out copies of which are held in the Fire Safety Risk Assessment file, also containing copies of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans and the Animal Evacuation Emergency Procedures (copies provided).

Site Maintenance and Cleaning Protocols for Service Areas and Equipment

At the start of each day animal care staff will do a visual check of all fencing, enclosures and structures and any damage will be reported to the daily manager for allocation to maintenance team and assessed for immediate repair or make good until a suitable repair can be carried out. If the damage poses risk to escape or injury of an animal the animal must be rehoused or removed to a secure area until the repair has been carried out.

Routine maintenance tasks will be allocated and carried out on a rolling basis (eg timber treatment of animal housing and structures).

A daily cleaning regime is displayed in all key work areas to promote good hygiene and implement infection prevention and control. Hand wash and hand sanitizer units are located in the main classroom, small animal room, orchard cabin, woodwork barn and garden / large animal paddock area.

Regular supplies of cleaning materials, detergents and disinfectants are supplied by Cleanmy Biz and substances which are subject to the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) are stored in the cleaning materials store cupboard off the main classroom and the equipment store adjacent to the small animal room. COSHH data sheets are held and copies provided.

The use of substances which are potentially hazardous to health are controlled within the limits of the COSHH regulations and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions for use and may include:

- Detergents, washing powders, washing up liquids or other cleaning agents
 - Antiseptics, disinfectants, other germicidal and biocidal agents
 - Oven cleaners, scouring powders, other kitchen cleaning agents
 - Pesticides, insecticides, vermin control, other toxic pest control materials
 - Drain cleaners, wood preservatives, herbicides
 - Drugs and prescription medications
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- Prior to use of any substance a member of animal care staff must check the manufacturer's instructions and contra indications for use to assess the risk to human and animal health and its suitability for the task involved.
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- When using any potentially hazardous cleaning agents or substances the manufacturer's instructions must be followed, control measures must be in place to prevent or adequately control exposure – including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and all staff will be instructed and trained about the risks and precautions to be taken and the effectiveness of these control measures.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Hereford Community Farm CIC will provide PPE in line with risk assessments and to promote effective infection prevention and control measures. PPE will also be made available for routine tasks and animal related activities for staff and participants to promote good hygiene.

Stocks of PPE are stored in the cloakroom and cleaning cupboard off the main classroom with a PPE box for daily use in all key work areas including the small animal room and garden / large animal paddocks area.

Staff are trained in effective use of PPE alongside Infection Prevention and Control training including risk from use.

Hereford Community Farm CIC will:

- Incorporate use of PPE within all risk assessments
- Determine if the proposed PPE is suitable and fit for use
- Take into account personal physical characteristics of the user
- Ensure where two or more items of PPE are used simultaneously they are compatible and are as effective when used they are used separately
- Ensure that soiled or potentially contaminated PPE is double bagged
- Remind all users of PPE that it must be disposed of in the designated PPE bins and extra care taken that it is not dropped or left in any animal enclosure

Waste Disposal

Hereford Community Farm CIC is committed to ensuring that the health, safety and welfare of staff, animals, visitors and service users is not adversely affected by waste materials which arise as a result of its usual activities. Where possible non contaminated waste will be recycled or repurposed or disposed of in a manner which has minimal environmental impact.

Animal bedding and non food waste will be composted where possible. Hereford Community Farm CIC has a Trade Waste agreement with Herefordshire Council with a weekly collection (Mondays).

Deceased animals are collected for cremation by Animal Funeral Services

<https://animalfuneralservices.co.uk>

Animal Care and Management Routines

For individual animal routine care and diet plans see Large Animal and Small Animal Records folders.

Routine Daily Work Plan for All Animals

First thing a.m when the site is unlocked by animal care staff;

- Walk round of all animal areas – small animal room and large animal paddocks with a visual check that all animals are active and showing signs of usual behaviour, visual check of all fencing and enclosures for any obvious signs of damage. Any concerns to be escalated – report to Daily Manager / Director for action. In event of an emergency follow usual procedures as on the Emergency Plan. Any routine maintenance or work tasks to be discussed at the morning staff meeting to be allocated for attention as required.

Daily Task List for All Animals

- Visual health check of all animals including observation of their behaviour, interaction with others in the group, eating and drinking normally, usual output and consistency of urine and faeces
- Ensure that all spaces that animals have access to are clean, safe and secure
- Ensure that all animals have access to ample clean water, appropriate diet and forage and that feeding and watering equipment is clean and in good order (large animals feeding equipment includes hayballs, haynets and feeding trugs)
- Ensure that all animal accommodation is cleaned or skipped out as required and replenished with the appropriate type and amount of bedding material presented in a way that is usual for that animal. Large animal paddocks to be cleared of faeces in toilet areas. All cleaning equipment to be disinfected and washed down after use (small and large animals) including small animal holding containers and pet carriers
- Ensure that all animals are able to express their natural behaviour (on their own or in bonded pairs or groups age, species and character appropriate) and have regular enrichment and mental stimulation eg;
 - Horses** to have slow feed hayballs, let out into additional grazing areas where appropriate, access to salt or mineral licks, Horslyx
 - Goats** have slow feed hayballs, mineral licks, hedgerow browse provided such as willow, hazel or apple leaves and branches, small feed of chopped vegetables (check diet sheets for suitability and quantity)
 - Sheep** have access to rough grazing during the day with hedgerow browse, mineral lick, scatter feeding of small quantity of coarse mix or chopped vegetables (see diet sheet)
 - Rabbits and Guinea Pigs** high quality meadow hay ad lib, fresh vegetables from the garden / greenhouse according to seasonal availability, treats and scatter feeding, apple branches to promote good dentition, access to exercise areas and run / play area.
 - Small Rodents** all are provided with apple branches or other suitable items for gnawing to promote good dentition. Gerbils have tubes or cardboard boxes to shred (food boxes only and checked for safety and suitability) dust bath provided and burrowing / nesting material. Scatter feeding or food can be hidden. Mice have access to the 'mouse gym' with climbing frame, rope ladders, millet spray and browse of apple and hazel twigs.
- Administration of any routine medication (animal care staff only)
- Ensure that all animals are able to interact with others of the same species unless separation is necessary for specific medical reasons or not recommended for the species / status of the animal (eg mature animals that may fight)
- Inform the relevant members of staff (Duty Manager / Director / Animal Care Staff) of any concerns with animals or any changes to daily care routine and record on individual care plans
- Ensure that trained / experienced members of staff are involved in the routine care of Hereford Community Farm CIC animals. Animal interactions with clients / groups during sessions will be supervised by Animal Care staff and this will be appropriate to the level of training or professional experience of the staff member. Non contact

walk round visits can be conducted by other staff under direction from Animal Care staff.

Weekly Task List

- Carry out routine maintenance of accommodation, fixtures, enclosures and fencing as necessary. Thorough safety check of all small animal housing, hutches and runs including latches and fixings forward any concerns for maintenance
- Thorough clean of animal care and session equipment to include: Grooming equipment (small and large animals), headcollars, lead ropes, exercise equipment, behavioural enrichment toys and equipment including treat toys, temporary accommodation or occasional use equipment / pet carriers
- Wash and scrub out small animal feeding bowls and water bottles (sterilize and thoroughly rinse out with water before re use with different animals or if particularly dirty)
- Large animal water butts and tanks to be emptied, scrubbed out and refilled
- Large animal hayracks to be brushed out thoroughly, washed out if dirty and allowed to dry before re use
- Brush out cobwebs and sweep clean all ledges in stables and goat / sheep housing
- Top up bark chippings in high traffic areas in large animal paddocks and gateways if ground is boggy in wet weather
- Thorough clean of large animal feed room, including feed bins, food prep area
- Thorough recorded health check of all animals (use large / small animal checklists)
- Check stocks of regular use medications and forward order requirements to Director / Daily Manager for ordering from vets
- Check stocks of feed, supplements and bedding and forward order requirements to Director / Daily Manager for ordering from Countrystore
- Check stocks of cleaning materials and equipment and forward order requirements to Director / daily Manager for ordering from CleanMy Biz
- Check stocks of PPE and First Aid equipment replenish from stock as needed and report any shortages to Director / Daily Manager
- Damp dust all surfaces in small animal room, wipe down window ledges and clean windows as necessary, clean between and behind animal housing, feed bins and cleaning equipment, temporary accommodation and isolation accommodation
- Steam clean of carpet in small animal room and other areas as necessary
- Wash all towels, cleaning cloths and animal bedding
- Deep clean area around sink in animal room
- Disinfect and wash out small animal waste bins (including wheelie bin)
- Empty vacuum cleaner
- Review all client : animal interactions and sessions and factor into following weeks sessions take forward any concerns or issues to Director / Daily Manager / Animal Care Team as appropriate

Monthly

- Deep clean stables and large animal housing, lift rubber matting and brush out, disinfect and rinse out dependent on need and weather conditions – avoid washing out field shelters in winter if doing so will cause water to make access to stables boggy, floor areas will not dry out properly or if there is a risk of freezing underfoot (slip hazard)
- Thorough clean of covered areas in goat pens removing deeply spoiled areas under hayracks, clean areas around climbing frames and water troughs
- Check all routine use equipment for signs of wear and tear compile a list for repair or replacement and forward to Director / Daily Manager

Ongoing

- Monitor all animals for general health and wellbeing – plan in routine checks for medication, veterinary care, farrier visits and foot care, shearing, faecal egg counts for parasite control, small animal bathing and preventative health care requirements update notes and animal care plans as necessary
- Management of paddocks, check for poisonous weeds, overhanging brambles, burrows or holes from rabbits and badgers causing trip hazards, electric fencing charger is working and effectiveness is not inhibited by herbage, extend or reduce grazing areas controlled by electric fencing, hedges are not overgrown or damaged by animals, all gates are secure when closed and fixings are working correctly.
- Hand sanitizer points and handwash units in large animal areas are clean, working correctly and replenished as required
- Risk assessment of each animal regarding its suitability and compatibility for interactions and activities in sessions, both for the safety of the person(s) involved but also the safety and welfare of the animals
- Use of established Traffic Light System updated to rest or retire animals from interactions or activities as necessary

If there are any immediate concerns about any animals health beyond what the team can deal with as routine for that animal it is expected that veterinary assistance will be sought immediately which may involve emergency call out

Additional attention or any change in care routine for an animal such as change in feed, bedding, enrichment and exercise requirements or health conditions must be recorded and other animal care staff informed to ensure continuity of care

Any concerns about an animal's behaviour or its suitability for interaction in activities or sessions with clients must be recorded and shared with the Animal Care staff, Director or Daily Manager

It is important to note that these time frames are the general guide for which these tasks would be addressed and would be attended to sooner if required

Communication

Animal Care staff and Director / Daily Manager will attend the daily morning meeting and all share telephone and email for out of hours contact if needed (see Emergency Plan)

