

General risk assessment for

Risk assessments should be reviewed at least annually, or after accidents, near misses and when significant changes in personnel or work practices occur. To assist managers when completing their risk assessments, guidance, information and a number of generic risk assessments and/or checklists are available on the HMRC Intranet under **Health and Safety**.

Advice on hazards, risks and risk assessment is available from the HMRC H&S Advisers. You can contact them through the HR Service Centre.

Location		Activity				
Offsite – public areas		Dog Walking				
Issued/Reviewed						
February 2025						
Number	Hazard	Possible effects/harm	Risk rating H, M, L	Detail existing controls	Detail further action required to reduce risk	Revised risk rating H, M, L
	Something with the potential to harm: hazards listed should be all those present before controls are in place.	Where a group of people may be affected differently, for example young people or expectant mothers, identify the separate effects/harm and risk rating.	Indicate the rating prior to controls being in place. (See page 7 for guidance on rating the risk.)	Provide details of control measures already in place. If measures are detailed in other documents, state where.	Note the action required, responsible person and target date.	Indicate the rating following implementation of controls.

1	Client's dogs	Physical harm from dog/s being walked. Scratches/bites and infection from open wounds.	M	<p>Dangerous dog breeds not walked.</p> <p>Dogs only walked alone, or with appropriate company (temperament and needs matched).</p> <p>Full details of dog's needs and any behavioural issues provided in Pet Information sheet.</p> <p>Meet and Greet conducted before walks begin.</p> <p>Mobile phone carried to request assistance as needed.</p> <p>First aid and medical treatment as appropriate.</p>	<p>All dogs' paperwork to be kept current and updated as necessary.</p> <p>Walkers to keep their knowledge of canine behaviour, body language, and breeds up to date. Also be confident treating minor injuries, additional medical assistance sought as needed.</p> <p>Any incidents or concerns to be reported to owner/s.</p>	L
2	Dangerous animals (other)	Cuts/bruises and infection from bites from other people's dogs, or other animals.	M	<p>Identify potentially aggressive or dangerous animals.</p> <p>Plan walks to avoid disturbing wild animals as much as possible. Consult other dog owners re hazard before approaching.</p> <p>Mobile phone carried to request assistance as needed.</p> <p>First aid and medical treatment as appropriate.</p>	<p>Awareness of potential animals located on walks, and what to do if attacked.</p> <p>Walkers to be confident treating minor injuries, additional medical assistance sought as needed.</p> <p>Report incident to police.</p>	L

3	Dangerous terrain (including mud, ice and water)	Trips, falls, cuts, puncture wounds, broken bones. Drowning, water borne diseases/pathogens.	H	General personal awareness – walkers must always remain alert to the terrain and environment around them. Be aware that surrounding environment may be wet/slippery or have holes and other trip hazards. Suitable footwear to be worn for the activity and terrain. Dogs should be taught commands for walking in tricky or more dangerous areas. As needed, refer to HSE guidance following exposure to contaminated water.	Walkers to be confident treating minor injuries, additional medical assistance sought as needed. General caution should be taken around water sources, keeping a safe distance from steep edges. Do not overreach	M
4	Moving vehicles	Physical harm from being hit by moving vehicles.	M	Keep to designated areas for pedestrians - pavements and footpaths. Take extra care where no designated area is present. Keep dogs under control and closer when walking near roads or vehicles.	High visibility clothing to be worn on walks in more rural areas (fewer pedestrian walkways) and walks in the early/late hours when it may not be light. Walking lights could also be used. Walkers to adhere to designated pedestrian areas.	L
5	Remote and/or isolated walking locations	Physical harm and psychological stress to walkers (anxiety out walking). Violence and threats to walking staff. Accidents. Difficulty accessing help if/when required.	L	Clear and complete diaries kept regularly updated. Session plans and expected return time shared with at least one other party. Contact telephone numbers made available. Mobile phone to be carried at all times.	Any concerns of incidents should be reported to the police or any relevant party. Pet owner may need to be informed – dependent on the circumstances of the incident. Incidents should also be detailed in MyPet files, linked to the dog walked and route taken, with appropriate warnings for future reference.	L

6	Lack of facilities at some walking sites, e.g. no toilets, no shade, no fresh water, dirty and/or cold/hot	Personal distress. Inability to continue the walks. Reduced ability and concentration,	L	Facilities available at each walk site can be noted for future reference. Range of walking kit available to walkers so they can dress appropriately and be prepared for a variety of weather conditions. Certain walking locations only to be visited when weather conditions are suitable – for example some walking locations may flood in the winter or be too hot without shade in the summer.	Walkers to regularly check weather conditions and temperatures for walks. Suitable locations and routes chosen for each walk, considering the dog, time of year, and predicted weather conditions. Walkers to use appropriate clothing and gear for the weather and time of year (e.g. woolly hat in winter, cap in summer).	L
7	Dog faeces contamination	Illness, infection, or infestation from dog faeces.	L	Dog faeces should be picked up on a regular basis and disposed of in an appropriate manner. When exercising, dogs should be monitored to ensure faeces is cleaned up as soon as possible. Dogs to be walked on a regular basis.	Walkers to ensure they carry sufficient poo bags for all walks, and dispose of faeces in suitable bins.	L

Location	Activity
Offsite – owner's home	In-home Pet Sitting, Drop-in Visits, Small Animal Services, Animal Training
Issued/Reviewed	
February 2025	

Number	Hazard	Possible effects/harm	Risk rating H, M, L	Detail existing controls	Detail further action required to reduce risk	Revised risk rating H, M, L
1	Client's pets	<p>Physical harm from pets being worked with or handled.</p> <p>Scratches, pecks/bites, wing flap/tail whip and infection from open wounds.</p>	M	<p>Dangerous dog breeds not worked with.</p> <p>Full details of pets' needs and any behavioural issues provided in Pet Information sheet.</p> <p>Meet and Greet conducted before sessions begin. Pre-assessment of pet/s prior to booking sessions.</p> <p>Pets will have an appropriate workload to avoid overstimulation. Sufficient break periods will also help animals relax and prevent incidents.</p> <p>Overly boisterous games, such as tug or play fighting, will be limited.</p> <p>Pets will not be approached or handled whilst eating – small animal species may sit on lap.</p> <p>Anyone handling animals will be trained in correct handling and restraint procedures.</p> <p>Pets' claws will be trimmed as necessary to minimise possible scratches.</p> <p>Mobile phone carried to request assistance as needed.</p>	<p>All dogs' paperwork to be kept current and updated as necessary.</p> <p>Sitters to adhere to correct handling and restraint procedures. Sitters to keep noise to a minimum whilst handling and must not run whilst handling any animal.</p> <p>Sitters to keep their knowledge of animal behaviour, body language, and species up to date. Also be confident treating minor injuries, additional medical assistance sought as needed.</p> <p>Hands to be washed before and after contact with any pet.</p> <p>Any injuries from the animals should be cleaned and treated immediately.</p> <p>Any incidents or concerns to be reported to owner/s.</p>	L

	2	Cleaning animal housing, cages and runs	<p>Illness, infection, or infestation from animal enclosures.</p> <p>Physical injury from damaged animal enclosures.</p>	M	<p>First aid and medical treatment as appropriate.</p> <p>Cleaning only to be undertaken by staff with full knowledge of pet's care plan requirements.</p> <p>Appropriate personal protective equipment (eg. Gloves, masks, aprons) to be available and worn by staff as needed.</p> <p>All waste from cleaning enclosures bagged and collected as part of the routine refuse collection.</p> <p>Cages and runs are inspected on a regular basis for broken wires, protruding nails etc.</p> <p>Staff are encouraged to have a tetanus injection every ten years.</p>	<p>Sitters to use provided personal protective equipment when needed.</p> <p>Proper cleaning and waste disposal procedures to be followed at all times.</p> <p>Any damage or danger observed on/around enclosures should be reported so that issue can be rectified.</p> <p>Equipment is not to be used if it is damaged or unsafe.</p>	L
	3	Dog faeces contamination	<p>Illness, infection, or infestation from dog faeces.</p>	M	<p>Dog faeces should be picked up on a regular basis and disposed of in an appropriate manner. A separate area should be provided for dogs to exercise outside and toilet.</p> <p>If dogs are in the exercise area, they should be monitored to ensure faeces is cleaned up as soon as possible.</p> <p>Dogs to be walked on a regular basis.</p>	<p>Sitters to follow dog faeces procedures, ensure they always carry sufficient poo bags, and dispose of faeces in suitable bins.</p>	L
	4	Disease – pets carry infectious diseases	<p>Physical harm from illness acquired from working with animals. Contamination may</p>	M	<p>Pets will be up to date on all vaccinations, worming, flea and tick treatments.</p>	<p>All pets' paperwork to be kept current and updated as necessary.</p>	L

	that can pass to humans Illness or infestation spread by animals	cause illness or infection, stomach upset, miscarriage in pregnant workers. Spread of infection or infestation.		Pets will be in good general health, be registered with and regularly attend check-ups with a qualified veterinarian. Vet is contacted if a pet is suspected of having a disease or illness. Animal enclosures are cleaned regularly, and waste products will be cleaned away promptly. Arrangements in place for the appropriate disposal of animal bedding and waste. Hands will be washed before and after handling or working with any pets. Strict cleanliness measures put in place to prevent the spread of infections.	Sitters to maintain hygiene and adhere to hand washing practices. Sitters to adhere to the cleanliness measures and wipe down work surfaces and touch points with appropriate disinfectant, especially if animals have been on the surfaces. Any pet toys and bedding must also be cleaned at regular intervals.	
5	Inhalation of dust, feathers, fur, food particles, or bedding materials	Allergic reactions and respiratory problems.	L	Anyone with known allergies or respiratory issues should avoid handling the animals. Towels used for handling or drying animals should be washed regularly to prevent a build-up of fur and dirt.	Anyone that feels unwell during, or after, handling a pet should inform another member of staff. Sitters to maintain hygiene and adhere to hand washing practices.	L
6	Slips and trips	Physical injury from slips, trips, or falls. Cuts/abrasions, puncture wounds, broken bones.	L	General good housekeeping is carried out. All areas and walkways are well lit and kept clear of debris. Pet toys, bones, leads should be tidied away and not left lying on the floors.	Sitters to maintain high standards of cleanliness, tidiness and living. Extra care to be taken where the risk is greater – near drinking/play areas, stairways, in darkness.	L

Areas near drinking bowls are dried regularly to avoid slips.

Location

Offsite – dependent on service provided

Activity

All Services

Issued/Reviewed

February 2025

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1	Animal Welfare	Physical or psychological harm to animals from not receiving sufficient care.	M	<p>Full details of pet's needs and any behavioural issues provided in Pet Information sheet.</p> <p>Meet and Greet conducted before any sessions begin.</p> <p>Pets should be in good health to undertake any activities they are required to do.</p> <p>Handlers must only use balanced and reward-based training methods or equipment.</p> <p>Pets must travel comfortably and confidently in any mode of transport they are expected to use.</p>	<p>All pets' paperwork to be kept current and updated as necessary.</p> <p>Sitters to keep their knowledge of animal behaviour, body language, and breeds up to date. Also be confident treating minor injuries, additional medical assistance sought as needed.</p> <p>Pets must be re-assessed regularly to confirm that they are in good health, both physically and emotionally, and have the appropriate temperament to continue with their arranged sessions.</p> <p>Any incidents or concerns to be reported to owner/s.</p>	L

2	Animal welfare	Insufficient care when feeding and watering the animals	M	<p>Active sessions with pets should be time limited to ensure they are not overwhelmed or overworked.</p> <p>Pets should have access to a quiet, safe and comfortable place to rest between sessions. Enough space must be provided for the pet to be able to move about comfortably and lay down.</p> <p>Pets must have access to fresh drinking water at all times, and be given the opportunity to toilet when required.</p> <p>If a pet shows signs of stress, anxiety, discomfort or fatigue, they must be taken out of the situation and only brought back into the session if fully recovered and the issue causing the stress has been identified and addressed.</p> <p>Pets must only wear items of clothing designed for their species – coats, collars, leads etc.</p> <p>Full details of pet's needs and any behavioural issues provided in Pet Information sheet. Care plan detailing arrangements for feeding, watering, exercise, and cleaning of housing included in this paperwork.</p> <p>Meet and Greet conducted before any sessions begin.</p>	<p>All pets' paperwork to be kept current and updated as necessary.</p> <p>Any questions to be raised with owners at the Meet and Greet.</p> <p>Any incidents or concerns to be reported to owner/s.</p>	L
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3	Animal escapes	<p>Physical harm to animals in the process of escaping their enclosure – cuts/scrapes, brakes/bruises from falls.</p> <p>Physical and psychological harm from dangers in the outside world – humans, vehicles, other animals</p>	M	<p>Birds are not to be removed from their enclosures unless absolutely necessary due to the high risk of escape.</p> <p>Only members of staff are permitted to remove pets from enclosures.</p> <p>Dogs will not be walked off-lead in insecure locations.</p> <p>Pets must be held securely whilst being handled, following correct handling and restraint procedures.</p> <p>Pets should be held in a suitable animal carrier when being transported, especially in a vehicle.</p>	<p>Sitters to adhere to correct handling and restraint procedures.</p> <p>Any animals showing signs of stress must be returned to their enclosure as soon as possible.</p>	L
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Declaration

Managers should monitor and review the application of the specified controls.

Prepared by

Lana Turner

Date

10/2/2025

Signature (SO or above)

L R Turner

Date

10/2/2025

I certify that all controls are in place which reduce risk to as low as is reasonably practicable, all staff have been informed, and safe systems of work have been applied.

Risk rating

This is **your** evaluation of the potential impact and likelihood of harm occurring.

Risk rating	Action required
<p>High For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fatality possible to one or more individuals however infrequent • major injury to few individuals occurring frequently • likelihood of long term muscular-skeletal problems affecting significant numbers of staff. 	<p>Immediate action required.</p>
<p>Medium For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • major injury to one/few individuals occurring infrequently • likelihood of long term muscular-skeletal problems affecting some staff. 	<p>Requires attention as soon as possible.</p>
<p>Low For example, minor injury occurring infrequently to few staff.</p>	<p>Not a priority, may need attention if not as low as reasonably practicable.</p>