

Safety Guidelines for Our Residential Visit to You

Miniature Shetland Therapy Ponies & Small Animals Team

We're Here to Help

- If you or any participants have additional needs, please let us know in advance so we can make adjustments to ensure everyone has a fantastic experience.

We are all about creating magical and safe experiences for everyone. To help make your time with us as smooth and enjoyable as possible, we've outlined some **important safety tips and guidelines**. Please take a moment to read through them, and let us know if you have any questions before your visit.

Safety Considerations for Residential Visits

We understand that residents may not always be wearing sturdy footwear, such as slippers or soft-soled shoes. For this reason, our team takes extra precautions to ensure everyone's safety and comfort during our visits.

- **Moving with Care:** Our ponies and handlers will always move slowly and carefully around residents to prevent any accidental trips or bumps.
- **Gentle Approach:** If residents are seated or have limited mobility, we will guide the animals in a way that allows safe, comfortable interaction without requiring anyone to move.
- **Stable Support:** For those who may wish to stand or interact more closely, our team is on hand to provide assistance and ensure a secure experience.
- **Small Animal Comfort & Safety:** Our rabbits, guinea pigs, and other small animals will be provided in soft-lined baskets where necessary. This ensures both resident comfort (preventing scratches) and the welfare of our animals, allowing for a calm and stress-free interaction.

Our priority is to create a safe, enjoyable, and accessible visit for all residents, no matter their needs. If you have any concerns or specific requests, please let us know. We're always happy to adapt!

Understanding Horses

Horses are affectionate and gentle animals, but they rely on their instincts to react to situations in their surroundings.

Keeping these in mind will help you stay safe:

1. Horses are unpredictable by nature and may respond unexpectedly if startled or stressed.
2. When a horse feels threatened, it may instinctively move forward, sideways, or try to flee.
3. Stay cautious around their back end, a startled horse might kick to protect itself. Always keep a safe distance behind them.
4. Approach horses calmly and quietly, preferably from their shoulder or lower neck.
5. Avoid loud noises or sudden movements, as these can alarm the horses.

6. Recognise signs of discomfort or fear, such as ears laid back, tensed muscles, or a tossing head. If you notice these signs, our team will step in to manage the situation.

7. Horses have blind spots directly behind them and in front of their nose. Always approach from the side, and avoid surprising them from behind or reaching for their muzzle.

Small Animal & Farm Animal Risks

We love including our small animals, such as rabbits, guinea pigs, and chickens, in your visit! We even have Pygmy Goats and Sheep. They're great fun, but it's important to interact with them safely:

- Small animals might scratch, nibble, or bite if they're startled or mishandled, so please follow the guidance of our team.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after handling the animals to minimise any risks of illness or infection. Hand sanitiser will also be available.
- For their health and safety, **never feed the animals without our team's permission.**

No Smoking or Vaping by the Animals: To ensure the safety and comfort of all our visitors and animals. We appreciate your cooperation in adhering to these guidelines to help us maintain a safe and pleasant environment for all.

Important Notes for Pregnant Women

If you're pregnant, please avoid handling or being near sheep that are due to lamb or have recently lambed. These sheep can carry infections, such as toxoplasmosis or chlamydiosis, that could pose risks during pregnancy.

If you have any concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to speak to us. We'll do everything we can to make your visit safe and enjoyable.

**** Important Reminder ****

Wash your hands thoroughly after handling the animals to minimise any risks of illness or infection.
Hand sanitiser will also be available.

We appreciate your cooperation in adhering to these guidelines to help us maintain a safe and pleasant environment for all.