# Press Release | 24 June 2024

**Best paw forward as therapy dog Ted joins Team QEH**

It was smiles and wagging tails all round for patients at The QEH as Ted, the new Pets As Therapy (PAT) dog, made his first visit to West Dereham ward.

Cockapoo Ted, who will be six in July and is registered with charity Canine Concern, visited the ward as part of an initiative to enhance the wellbeing of patients. Staying in hospital can often be a stressful time and introducing a dog into the ward environment not only brings joy and companionship but can help to relieve some of this stress for patients and their families.

A person in a hospital bed with a dog

Description automatically generatedWhile on his first visit Ted met 70 year-old Irene Fiander, from King’s Lynn, who was being visited by her daughter Zoe.

Irene said: “It’s so lovely seeing a dog on the ward – it’s a really nice distraction and makes everyone much happier.”

Ted has been a regular PAT dog with Canine Concern since February 2020. His owner Sara Headford knows only too well the calming influence a dog can have in a clinical setting. As a practicing nurse of 38 years herself, she trained at The QEH and since has worked through several roles in the health service. In her spare time she volunteers with Ted

Sara experienced the benefit of PAT dogs first hand, so signed Ted up so he could start making a difference. She said: “My husband’s Grandmother was 99 years of age when she passed away and Ted was the last male love of her life! We all visited her in Southmeads Hospital in Bristol, when the staff realised Ted was a PAT dog he would visit any patients that wanted to see him and also in the care home in which Gran passed away.”

Ted is now a regular visitor at The QEH every other month from now on to join the other PAT dog Milo, who also regularly visits.

Two women sitting on the floor with a dog

Description automatically generatedJoanne Rowe, voluntary services manager at the Trust, said: “Dog therapy is a great way to boost morale for patients on our wards. It’s a welcome distraction for patients and provides extra stimulation and supports patients to be more active whilst in hospital.

“This is an initiative The QEH is keen to develop over the coming months to make dog therapy on wards a regular occurrence so if you have a PAT registered dog who could visit, please get in touch.”

For more information about volunteering , contact Joanne Rowe, by email: volunteerapplications@qehkl.nhs.uk or call 01553 214687.

**Ends. Notes to editors;** For media enquires only, please contact Communications Team, [media.enquiries@qehkl.nhs.uk](mailto:media.enquiries@qehkl.nhs.uk) or 01553 613216. For all other enquiries, please contact QEH Switchboard on 01553 613613.