



Paws & Connect

TRUST. CONNECTION. GROWTH.



THEORY OF CHANGE

A Systems Model of Connection, Growth and Belonging

Safe, trusting relationships are the foundation of healthy development. When young people and animals experience safety, trust and connection, positive change ripples outward—strengthening individuals, families, animals, organisations and communities.



OUR BELIEF

Safe, trusting relationships are the foundation of healing, growth and lifelong wellbeing for young people and animals.

OUR FIVE EVIDENCE-INFORMED PROPOSITIONS



1 Safe relationships foster healthy development.



2 Companion animals can become important attachment figures and sources of social support.



3 Thoughtful matching increases the likelihood of a successful human-animal relationship.



4 Ongoing support strengthens and sustains positive outcomes.



5 Positive outcomes extend beyond the young person to benefit animals, families and communities.

INPUTS



Young people
Seeking connection, support and a fresh start



Rescue animals
In need of safe, loving homes and belonging



Rescue partners
Providing animals, expertise and ongoing support



Community & supporters
Volunteers, donors, advocates and local community



Knowledge & evidence
Research, best practice and lived experience

PARALLEL PATHWAYS OF CHANGE

Young people and animals grow together through a shared relationship.

1. SAFE RELATIONSHIPS FOSTER HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT



- Emotional safety
- Acceptance and non judgement
- Predictability
- A sense of being valued



- Physical safety
- Kind, consistent care
- Calm, secure environment
- A sense of being valued

2. TRUST OPENS THE DOOR TO CONNECTION

- Building attachment
- Developing empathy
- Strengthening communication
- Experiencing companionship and belonging



- Learning to trust
- Feeling secure
- Positive interactions and gentle handling
- Experiencing companionship

3. CONNECTION SUPPORTS HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

- Emotional regulation
- Responsibility and routine
- Self esteem and identity
- Learning and engagement



- Improved wellbeing
- Confidence grows
- Positive behaviour and social skills
- Enrichment and stimulation

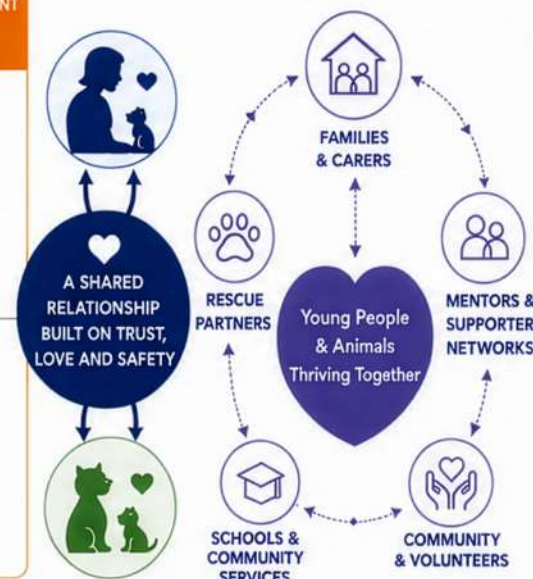
4. HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT BUILDS RESILIENCE

- Confidence and self-belief
- Coping and problem-solving
- Sense of purpose
- Hope for the future
- Greater independence

- Greater resilience
- Reduced fear and stress
- Stronger bond with humans
- Better able to adapt and thrive

AN INTERCONNECTED SYSTEM

Stronger together.
Better outcomes for all.



LONG-TERM IMPACT

Stronger today.
Brighter tomorrow. Together.

5. POSITIVE OUTCOMES STRENGTHEN THE WHOLE SYSTEM

- FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**
- Improved wellbeing
 - Stronger relationships
 - Successful adoptions and stability
 - Greater life opportunities
 - Healthier, happier futures

- FOR ANIMALS**
- Safe, loving forever homes
 - Better physical and mental health
 - Reduced anxiety and fear
 - A life of dignity, care and belonging

6. A FUTURE OF BELONGING, RESILIENCE AND COMPASSION

- Stronger, more connected families and communities
- Less animals in pounds and shelters, less overcrowding and euthanasia
- A culture of compassion, responsibility and respect
- A kinder, more resilient world for people and animals



WHO WE WORK WITH

Young people (10-25) facing challenges such as anxiety, low self-esteem, traumas, social isolation, disengagement or life transitions.
We welcome all backgrounds, identities and abilities.



AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING

It's the relationship.
Built on trust. Nurtured with patience.
Growing together.

OUR FOUNDATION – GUIDED BY OUR PRINCIPLES



Relationships come first
Trust and connection are the foundation of everything we do.



We honour animals as individuals
with unique needs, deserving of compassion, protection and respect.



Safety is non-negotiable
Emotional and physical safety for both young people and animals is paramount.



Young people lead their journey
We empower choice, voice and ownership at every step.



Collaboration creates impact
We work together with partners, families and communities.



Evidence guides us
We learn, reflect and continually improve.



Sustainability matters
We build a future where people and animals can thrive together.



BUILDING TRUST. CREATING CONNECTION. GROWING TOGETHER.

