

Fostering

Whether attracted to this section out of curiosity or eager to offer this service, we will try and explain what is involved and how it works. Thank you for your interest.

Being offered a foster place means everything to our dogs and we are very grateful in return. We would not be able to help as many dogs as we do without our fosterers. However, we do need firm commitment so our dogs get a fair chance to settle. This introduction contains information about fostering and will help you decide if you are willing and eligible to foster.

The Invaluable Role of the Fosterer

Providing a home environment where one of our dogs is getting individual love and attention is far more preferable than the alternative kennel environment. A domestic situation where they can stay, ideally until their forever home is found is so important to them.

Fosterers provide invaluable information about our dogs. This helps us to ensure we match our dog to the right home. We can review or confirm knowledge held about our dogs, such as housetraining, acceptance of visitors, car travel, adaptability, behaviour on being left, to mention but a few key points. Fosterers also provide vital care. Some dogs come to us in a very poor condition e.g. under or grossly overweight, infected ears etc. These conditions are better managed in a home environment.

Some dogs come directly from their homes, so we can match them into a suitable foster home straight away and avoid them going into kennels. This helps to retain and, often improve, their skills further. Foster homes also allow us to optimize our available kennels so we can help more dogs. Many of the dogs we help would have been put to sleep if a rescue like Rescue Remedies could not take them in. Fosterers save lives by allowing many others to be helped and generally fostered dogs move faster through to their permanent homes.

Our Fostering Process

1. Complete a Dog Fostering Questionnaire, downloadable below. E-mail it to lynne@rescuemedies.co.uk. This information will allow us to match up a dog to your life style and experience. We will place a dog that is already known to us, or has a full history, with a first time fosterer.
2. If you haven't heard from us in the next few days please drop us an e-mail for an interview/chat. We will then e-mail you our Fostering Agreement which makes clear the roles and responsibilities of the fosterer and Rescue Remedies. It will help to ensure you understand our policies.
3. A home check will be arranged by one of our volunteers to confirm your home environment is suitable.
4. When your first dog arrives, you and a representative from Rescue Remedies will sign the fostering agreement, if this hasn't ready been done. This agreement relates to your first dog and will also cover you for future dogs.

General Requirements of Fostering

Rescue Remedies fosterer's agreement covers everything you need to know about the responsibilities of caring for one of our dogs and how we will support you. We will offer a set-up

package and try to help towards ongoing costs if required. Most fosterers offer their foster dogs the full provision of needs during their stay, funding basics such as food, bedding, toys and other equipment.

Provisions for veterinary care, illness and emergencies are also covered in the agreement. You will be made aware of the person you will liaise with and you will be given an enquiries line and emergency number which will be available to you to cover all but the very late and early hours. We have a list of Rescue Remedies approved vets which we trust. In the case of an emergency, we would expect you to contact us or, should this not be possible, one of our approved vets, immediately. Either way, every possible effort must be made to contact Rescue Remedies at the earliest possible point. We are not responsible for vet bills without such involvement.

We are looking for foster homes to provide a minimum of two week's care, but ideally until a forever home is found. Some of our dogs have been waiting a long time in kennels or are just not coping. We may suggest such a needy dog if your circumstances suit and once you have become more experienced.

We accept applications from foster homes that are only available for short periods like weekends or a spell of 3 weeks, e.g. prior to going on holiday. We need to have foster homes within easy travelling distance of Surrey, but if you are mobile and willing to travel, we may be able to place our dogs further afield. We often need a place for our dogs so they can receive post-operative care, or cover for other fosterers in the event of illness or a weekend away. Over public holidays we have to severely restrict the number of dogs in kennels as kennel owners need boarders to come in. Therefore a holiday long weekend would take pressure off us and offer a break to a dog that we judge would not be too upset by the return to kennels.

Each dog will have different requirements and abilities in areas such as being left or exercise. We consider this when placing a dog with you. The maximum time we will allow them to be left alone is four hours on a regular basis. Lunchtime company and exercise for our dog or a reliable dog walker maybe acceptable for full day workers. Organising day-care arrangements with a neighbour or relative might be acceptable, but we would need to discuss our dog with these supportive individuals.

Selecting a Foster Dog and if things go wrong

We will work with you to ensure the dog selected for you to foster is the most suitable for your circumstances. Occasionally some fosterers may agree to take a dog in as an emergency, which may not entirely match their circumstances e.g. you don't have a fully secure garden, but are prepared to manage them on an extender lead for a short spell to save a pup going into kennels. This will always be discussed with you. We will not always have a suitable dog available. You may need breaks between foster dogs, that is fine too. We will need to know of any periods when you can't keep our dog e.g. a planned holiday, so we can organise cover.

From time to time we have instances where a dog taken on, does not work out. This may be as a result of inaccurate information given by the previous owner, the dog displaying new behaviours in the home environment that we had not experienced in kennels, or the fosterer realising that they cannot cope with a particular type of situation. On these occasions we will always endeavour to take the dog back as soon as we can arrange an alternative foster place or kennel. You may be asked to hold on for several days. If the foster place doesn't work out or the dog needs to go into kennels as planned, we expect our fosterers to arrange transport back into kennels. In such circumstances the more notice we can have the better.

If you find you want to offer your foster dog it's forever home, it is important you discuss this as soon as possible with Rescue Remedies as per the agreement. Without this discussion and where a good family is already in the motions of applying, we will continue to pursue the family who have emotionally committed.

Fostering through to homing

Hospitality offered to our dogs also extends to 'would be adoptees' coming to meet their potential dog. You will need to be comfortable with them visiting your home to meet our dog. You may have already spoken with them. You play a vital role, whilst trying not to be too judgmental or prescriptive. We take great care in selecting our adoptees, but you may see aspects that haven't been appreciated before e.g. mention of a change of job or problems with a neighbouring dog. If at any point, you feel uneasy about the adoption, it is important you raise your concerns with your Rescue Remedies contact, before letting the dog go.

All being well, the adoption process will be completed there and then, or a mutually convenient time will be arranged for the new family to collect. The joy of seeing a dog that arrived on your doorstep with nowhere to go but a kennel, then going on to light up the lives of their new found family, is one of the most rewarding experiences you can have.