

FOSTERING FACT SHEET.

Why do dogs need fostering?

The dogs that we need foster homes for are the cruelty case dogs. These are dogs that have been removed from their owners by the RSPCA Inspectors and their owners are being investigated and prosecuted for offences under the Animal Welfare Act. The RSPCA holds the dog as evidence during this time, which can be many months, but the dog is still the property of the owner until the case is heard in Court.

This means that the dog cannot be rehomed until the case is concluded. The Court will decide if the owner is guilty of the charge(s) brought by the RSPCA, and will consider whether the dog should be confiscated from the owner and awarded into RSPCA care. Occasionally the courts will not ban the owner of the dog and will allow them to have their animal back. Thankfully this is a rare outcome but the fosterer has to prepare themselves for this possibility.

What sort of care will the dog need?

Being the subject of a cruelty case means that the dog will have been neglected and mistreated in some way and is deserving of the best possible care. The primary objective of the cruelty case dog fosterer is to provide the dog with a loving home environment. The fosterer will need to monitor the behaviour of the dog and ensure that the animal begins to thrive whilst in their care.

The fosterer will provide the dog with regular meals and exercise. Some dogs may be following special diets or be in need of medication. Veterinary advice must be followed at all times.

Will there be any problems with the dog?

The dog could have emotional deficits as a result of their cruel treatment. This could impact on their toilet training and general behaviour. This could pose a potential problem but each dog will have been behaviourally assessed by our own experienced staff who will provide the fosterer with as full a picture as possible of each individual dog and its personality, and advice on training.

How long will I need to foster for?

Cases are sometimes resolved quite swiftly in the courts but on occasion these cases can span 12 months or more. It is beneficial for the dog to stay in foster until the case is resolved, but if this is not possible, short term fostering is still helpful for the dogs wellbeing, and enable us to have a better understanding of the dog in a home environment.

If the circumstances of the fosterer change in a significant way and they can no longer commit themselves to the care of the fostered animal, the Society will take back the animal into their care.

What support will I get as a fosterer?

The fosterer can expect the full support of the RSPCA for the duration of their fostering period. The fostering coordinator will make regular contact to ensure that all is well for all parties. The fosterer will have confidence that any queries or issues they may have will be resolved.

The RSPCA will provide food, equipment (lead, collar, ID disc, indoor kennels if necessary), regular treatment for fleas and worms, and pay associated veterinary costs as agreed under the terms of the fostering agreement.

The Animal Centre staff will provide ongoing support on behaviour and welfare issues.

What happens at the end of the cruelty case?

Following a successful prosecution, the courts will usually award custody of the dog to the RSPCA, who will then be able to look for a permanent home for the dog.

There is a possibility that the courts will not confiscate the dog, and in some cases dogs are returned to their original owner. This is thankfully an infrequent outcome, and is only in circumstances where the owner shows that they are able to meet the welfare needs of the dog.

It is highly likely that the fosterer will have bonded with their foster dog, and this makes the prospect of handing the dog back to the Centre at the end of the fostering period quite difficult.

But one of the main benefits of providing a loving home to a dog who has been neglected or abused is the knowledge that you have restored that animal's faith in their human companions. The benefits of fostering a cruelty case dog cannot be overstated. Fostering any animal is a rewarding experience but taking care of a neglected or abused animal brings its own special reward.

There are always dogs waiting to go into foster homes, and helping many dogs on a temporary basis by fostering is as important as the permanent home they eventually need.

What do I do now if I want to be a fosterer?

If you think that you are the person we are looking for and could provide one of these dogs with a loving environment, please complete the enclosed dog fostering application form and send it back for the attention of our dog fostering co-ordinator.

Thank you for showing an interest in helping our dogs!

