



Rehoming an RSPCA horse FAQ's

Everything you wanted to know, but didn't like to ask!

So you've been looking for your next horse for a while. You've browsed online, you've asked around people you know, but the right horse just hasn't trotted into your life yet. But what about rehoming a horse? If you've always liked the idea of giving a horse in need a second chance, then the RSPCA has plenty of horses that are looking for you as much as you're looking for them!

If you're unsure about the ins and outs of rehoming a horse from the RSPCA, here's our Q&A to answer all your questions, queries and maybe even a few misconceptions!

I'd like a riding horse! Is it true I can only get a companion animal from the RSPCA?

Absolutely not! We have a huge range of different breeds, sizes and ages of horses in our care, and a number of them are very capable of being ridden again, once they are matched with the right home. We also have facilities to start youngsters that we rescue, which many people aren't aware of, so your next project could come from us! Likewise, we have lots of older horses, shetlands and donkeys, and those who have been through so much trauma they cannot be ridden, but all of these can make superb companion ponies. But there's no reason why many of our other horses can't go on to learn new disciplines, from becoming your happy hacking horse to a carriage driving pony!

Does the RSPCA really want to rehome a horse to me? I hear they can be quite picky!

Obviously, we will only rehome our horses to suitable homes where we are sure they will be looked after for the rest of their lives. These animals, after all, have been through some very tough times and deserve a loving home for life. It's no secret that we are currently in a horse crisis in the UK, and the amount of rescues we carry out is proof of this. We currently have over 600 horses in our care, which is far more than we can house ourselves, but we would never turn away a horse in need. We currently have 76 per cent of our horses in private boarding as our own equine centres are full, and as we are constantly rescuing more horses that desperately need us every week, we are always very keen to find forever homes for as many horses as we possibly can.

Will I ever be able to officially own the horse, or can the RSPCA take it back at any time?

When people first rehome a horse from us, we keep in touch for the first 6 months, as much to check on the horse as to check on the owner! This is just to keep an eye on how horse and owner are getting on with each other, and give owners the opportunity to review the situation if perhaps they are not getting on

as well as they had hoped with the animal. After six months, the horse, pony or donkey will be officially signed over from us to the new owners. We always encourage owners to let us know how things are going, and raise any concerns.

Will a rescued horse be naughty, and will it ever settle into a normal yard routine?

A lot of our horses, ponies and donkeys wouldn't be suitable for first time owners, and this is simply because they need a confident, experienced home that will bring them on and build up a good relationship with them. Some of them will have needed a lot of rehabilitation work. Therefore experience with horses and patience is a must! But like the thousands of cats and dogs that are rehomed every year in the UK, there's no reason why with love and care, horses cannot settle into a new home and be loving, lifelong friends too. It is extremely rewarding for us everytime we watch a rescued horse flourish in the loving home they deserve.

What is the adoption process and time-frame?

The first step is to have a look online at our available horses. Then fill in our horse and pony fostering and adoption application form. We will then be in touch with you if there is a suitable horse, donkey or pony available. If your application is successful, you will be invited to either meet your chosen horse or meet an equine that may be better suited to you. Horses cannot easily be moved about among our animal centres so you may have to travel if you want to adopt a horse because they are never rehomed unseen. You may need to travel to an equine centre to try the horse more than once if this is felt to be necessary to ensure that you and the horse are right for each other. Before a horse or pony can be adopted from us we always carry out a home visit. This gives us the opportunity to assess both your expertise and your facilities, and support you in preparing for the arrival of your horse. There is nothing quite like the feeling we get from successfully rehabilitating and rehoming a rescue animal.

How much is the adoption fee, and what health concerns should I consider?

Depending on the type of horse, pony or donkey, we ask for an adoption fee of between £50 - £500. Every animal will have a passport, be microchipped, be vaccinated against tetanus, have had their feet and teeth checked, and you'll be told a thorough history of what has happened to them in our care including any behavioural assessments. It costs us a great deal to care for, rehabilitate and rehome each horse so we feel the adoption fee really is a small contribution towards this cost. It also helps to cover the costs of microchipping and vaccinations, and gelding of males.

It sounds great; I really think I could offer a horse, pony or donkey a home.

We have three specialist equine centres covering England and Wales - in County Durham, Shropshire and Surrey. To find out more about rehoming an equine from us, you can visit our website where there is [more information and all the contact details you need to register your interest](#). You can also [view some of the animals we have available for rehoming](#). We are also looking for special foster homes for some of our animals, where we ask very experienced homes to look after certain animals for a minimum of six months while they rehabilitate. You can register your interest in fostering online too.

It sounds great but I'm just not ready to adopt a horse. How else can I help RSPCA horses?

We appreciate any form of your support, from holding a bake sale to running a marathon! But you could also donate any unwanted tack, rugs or other equipment. Also by spreading the word to your horsey friends that the RSPCA has a huge number of very versatile horses desperately needing homes, you will take another horse one step closer to finding his or her forever home.