



# The Mayhew Animal Home Dog Fostering Introduction

## **The fostering process**

Thank you for your interest in fostering for The Mayhew Animal Home. We would not be able to help as many dogs as we do at The Mayhew without our dedicated team of foster volunteers. This introduction contains important information about dog fostering with The Mayhew Animal Home and will help you decide if you are willing and eligible to foster. Our fostering process is as follows:

1. Complete a Dog Fostering Application. This form allows you to state the type of dog you are willing to foster, including size, temperament and behaviour.
2. Have an informal interview/chat with our Dog Adoption Officer or Dog Fostering Co-ordinator.
3. Receive a home visit from one of our volunteers to confirm that your home environment will be suitable for dog fostering.

## **Why do we foster our dogs?**

1. A home environment where a dog is getting lots of attention and love is far more preferable than a dog being in a kennel environment. Some dogs cope well in a kennel environment but it is always much nicer for the dog to have a temporary home environment in which they can stay until a permanent home is found for them. Ideally we look for foster homes that can offer the dog a temporary home until it finds its permanent home, without a need for the dog to be returned to kennels in between times.
2. Foster carers can provide valuable information about the dog that will help us match up the dog with the most appropriate permanent home. If a dog is stressed in kennels you will not always see its true personality and behaviour. For example, a dog that may bark frequently in kennels due to stress may not bark at all in a home environment and this is very useful to know when it comes to re-homing the dog. We are also able to confirm things that we think we already know about the dog, such as whether it's toilet trained or has any behavioural issues.
3. Foster homes allow us to free up space in our kennels, which means we can cater for another dog or sometimes two dogs. Many of the dogs we see at The Mayhew are potentially animals that would be put to sleep if a rescue centre like The Mayhew cannot help to re-home, so foster carers can help save dogs lives by freeing up space.

## **Expenses and health issues**

The Mayhew Animal Home are unable to provide travel expenses but we can provide food, bedding, toys and all other equipment needed, however as a charity we welcome and appreciate any help towards these provisions.

If your fostered dog becomes ill, you must agree to bring it back to The Mayhew for veterinary treatment, or in case of an emergency out of normal Mayhew hours, contact Putney Animal Hospital on 0870 908 5316 / Mayhew 0208 968 2448. The Mayhew will not pay for private veterinary fees.

### **Length of stay, general requirements and absences from fostering**

We are looking for foster homes that can provide a minimum of two week's care, but ideally homes that could potentially be available for up to three months. On average dogs will be in a foster home for 3-4 weeks before they go onto a permanent home.

Unfortunately we are unable to accept applications from homes that are only available for weekends. This is because it is more traumatic than beneficial for the dog to go into a new unfamiliar home for such a short space of time before coming back to The Mayhew again.

Depending on the breed and age of the foster dog, you will need to be able to exercise it for up to two hours a day. For all dogs, the maximum time we will allow them to be left alone is four hours. If you work full-time and the dog would be left alone all day, you would not be eligible to foster unless there was a secondary foster carer to provide company and exercise for the dog while you're at work. A secondary foster carer would need to be at least 18 years of age.

If you have a foster dog and need to take an unplanned absence from fostering, we will of course have the dog back into kennels. In such circumstances, the more notice we can have, the better.

### **Selecting a foster dog and falling in (or out!) of love**

We will work with you to ensure the dog selected for you to foster is the most suitable for your circumstances. This may mean that sometimes we do not have a suitable dog, for example if you have children and we don't have a dog that is good with children. In such circumstances we ask for your patience and will contact you when a dog becomes available.

From time to time we have instances where a dog taken on does not work out in the foster home. This may be a result of inaccurate information given by the previous owner, the dog displaying new behaviour in the home environment that we had not experienced in kennels, or the foster carer realising that they cannot cope with what they'd signed up for (particularly in the case of behavioural problems). On these occasions we will always have the dog back to us either the same day or the next day, as kennel space allows.

Approximately a third of foster carers will go on to permanently adopt the dog they have on foster. Please do not underestimate the emotional attachment you will form with the dog, often in a matter of a few days. At The Mayhew we are really looking for foster carers who are not fostering to try a dog out before deciding whether to keep them, but it is inevitable that even with the best intentions some foster carers may choose to keep the dog. It should be noted that as a foster carer you are not treated as a priority for permanent ownership. If we have someone who has already been sent to view the dog in the foster home and then you decide you want to keep the dog, you would be second in line for the dog. It is also important to realise that The Mayhew must consider your home to be a suitable permanent home for a fostered dog before adoption can take place.

There are two types of dog available for fostering, those looking for a permanent home and those on our Pet Refuge scheme. These are both discussed on the next page.

### **Fostering requirements for dogs looking for permanent homes**

Dogs awaiting a permanent home in our kennels may be with us as a result of being handed over by their existing owner, being brought in as a stray, or being rescued from a dog pound somewhere in the UK. Some of these dogs await permanent homes for longer than others, and we're keen to foster out these dogs in the interim for the reasons previously mentioned. These dogs will typically be larger breeds, dogs with behavioural issues and elderly dogs.

To foster dogs looking for a permanent home you will need to be located within the M25 and be willing and able to travel to and from The Mayhew to collect the dog and bring it back to us. Please bear in mind that we will not be able to predict when a suitable home may be found, so you may find that you take a dog in to foster on a Monday and have to return it on a Friday. In this case you will be making two return trips to us within a matter of days. In extenuating circumstances we may be able to find a volunteer driver to collect a dog, but much depends on how far away from The Mayhew you live.

If you choose to foster dogs looking for permanent homes, you will need to be comfortable with prospective adopters visiting you in your home to meet the dog. Visitors to your home will have already been interviewed and vetted by the Dog Adoption Officer, who will have felt they would make suitable owners for the dog. These visits are another reason why we can't foster dogs out too far away from The Mayhew, as people may not be willing to travel to Birmingham to view a dog!

Once we have found a dog a permanent home, we arrange a final vet-check prior to re-homing. This will usually need to take place on a Friday, the day before the dog goes to its new home. All dogs re-homed that week are collected by the new owners on a Saturday. Occasionally we may be able to arrange for the final vet-check to be carried out on a Saturday morning but that will depend on the availability of a Mayhew vet. Foster carers can choose whether to return the dog to us on the Friday for the vet-check and then leave it in kennels for the evening, or whether to take the dog home after the vet-check and return it to The Mayhew by 11am on the Saturday.

### **Fostering requirements for dogs on our Pet Refuge scheme**

Our Pet Refuge Scheme offers a lifeline for owners who are temporarily unable to look after their dogs due to illness, hospitalisation, mental health issues, or other emergencies. These owners are without family or friends in a position to help but will continue to care for their dog in the long-term. In these instances we always try and find foster homes as there is no need for the dog to be in our kennels and viewed by perspective owners. Our Pet Refuge Scheme offers care for up to three months, after which we would ask the owner to consider permanently re-homing their dog.

To foster dogs on the Pet Refuge Scheme you can live outside of the M25, but you must still to be willing and able to travel to and from The Mayhew to collect the dog and bring it back to us. When the owner has confirmed they are able to have their dog back with them, we will arrange a mutually convenient time for it to be returned to us.

**If you would like to apply to become a dog foster carer, please request a Dog Fostering Application Form from our Dog Fostering Co-ordinator on 07951 652 822 or at [dogfostering@mayhewanimalhome.org](mailto:dogfostering@mayhewanimalhome.org).**