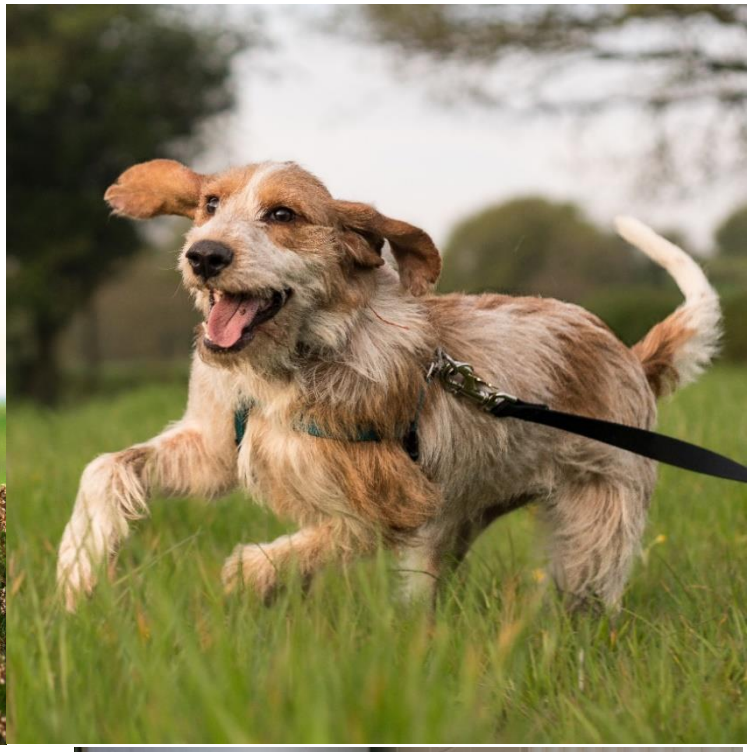


Moorlands Dog Rescue

A Guide To Fostering

Moorlands
DOG RESCUE

About Moorlands Dog Rescue

Moorlands Dog Rescue have been established since January 2014 and have rescued over 300 dogs and counting of all sizes, ages and breeds. We are a small charity which is ran entirely by volunteers and relying solely on donations with no paid staff or overheads. Moorlands Dog Rescue have no offices and no phone number as all of the team members use their own cars, homes and phones and work their volunteering around their families, jobs and businesses. Moorlands Dog Rescue's mission is to relieve the suffering of dogs within the Staffordshire Moorlands and surrounding area in need of care and attention and in particular to provide foster homes or other facilities for the reception, care and treatment of such dogs prior to adoption homes being found. Moorlands Dog Rescue are an all volunteer foster home based organisation and as such do not have a physical shelter or kennels. Despite this, we offer a lifetime back up, meaning that we insist any of our dogs come back to us if for any reason whatsoever the placement is no longer viable. Dogs that find themselves in our care are those who have been abandoned, are homeless or unwanted and who come from homes, shelters, vets, boarding facilities or the street.

What Do Others Say?

"We were a little bit unsure whether fostering would be right for us at first, but our Key Worker really assured us and made us feel comfortable that we would be able to manage it. We have fostered six dogs for Moorlands Dog Rescue and we absolutely love it. The progress that you see with some dogs is amazing and it is so rewarding to watch them grow into wonderful pets and to think to yourself "I helped them get there". We would strongly recommend fostering with Moorlands Dog Rescue to anybody considering it" Sarah Turner and Will Holdcroft

Moorlands DOG RESCUE

What Is The Role Of A Foster?

The role of a foster home is to help the dog to relax and settle, to build their confidence, give the dog lots of love and affection and to help Moorlands Dog Rescue understand the dog better so that they can find a home that is most suitable for them. Your job is to look after your foster dog until they are ready for their forever home and their forever home is ready for them. You will need to look after your foster dog for as long as it takes for Moorlands Dog Rescue to find them a good home, this can be anywhere from a week to a couple of months. Some dogs will find homes very quickly and others will take a little longer, however the more stability your foster dog has during this time period the better chance they will have of finding the right home. Moorlands Dog Rescue's aim is to get your foster dog into the right home quickly whilst ensuring that the transition will be suitable for your foster dog and maximising the chances that the dog will fit into their new home well.

What Is The Process?

Each dog that comes into Moorlands Dog Rescue's care is assigned a Key Worker whose main responsibility is to look after the welfare of the dog. These team members are highly experienced in working with rescue dogs and many have qualifications and careers in the pet services industry. Every decision that they make will be in the best interest of the dog.

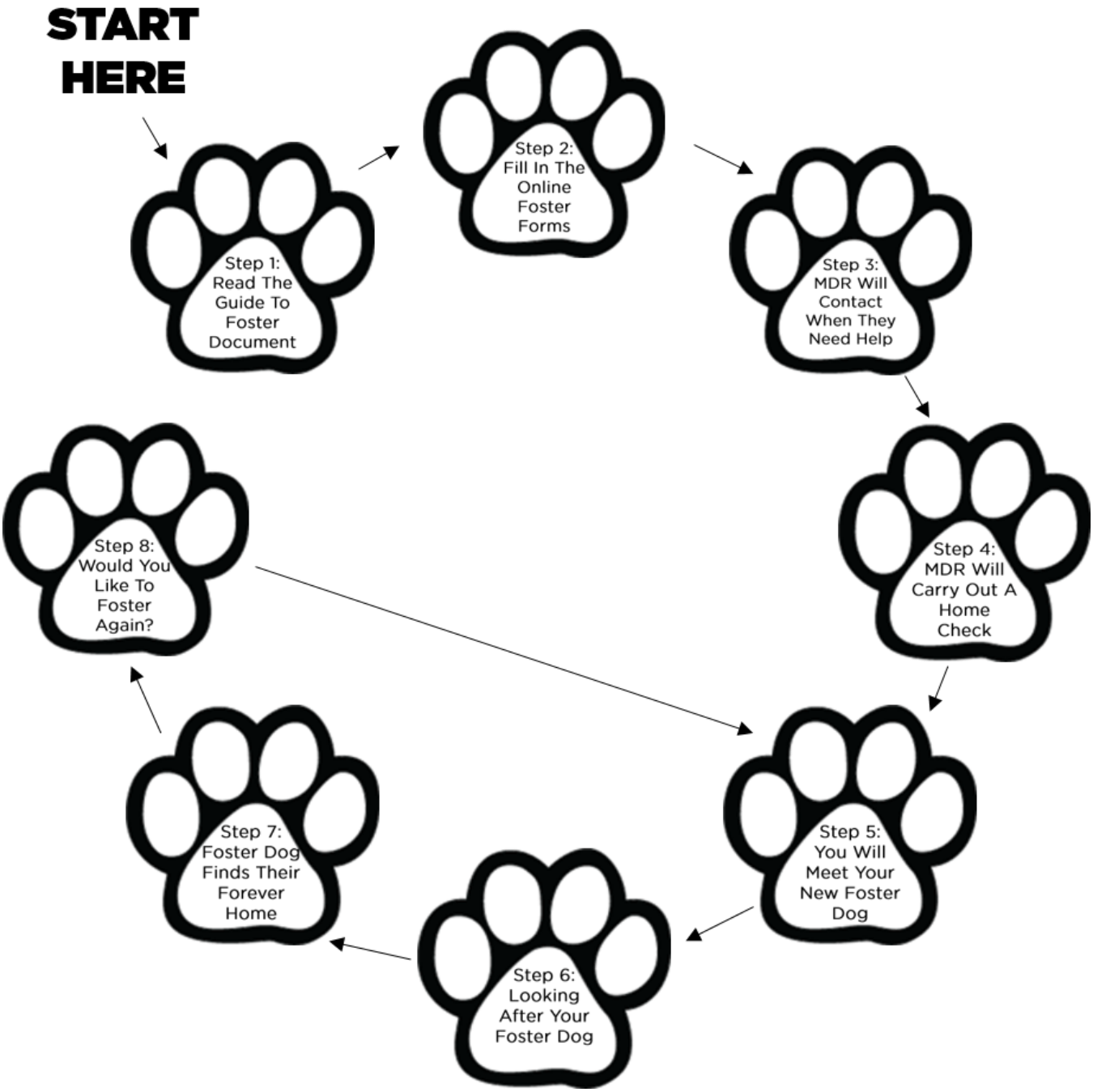
After filling in your foster application, somebody from the Moorlands Dog Rescue team will consider your application and be in touch when a suitable dog comes into the rescue's care. When this happens, your home will need to be checked to ensure that it is suitable for fostering a Moorlands Dog Rescue dog. The dog's Key Worker may be the person that carries out the home check with you, or it may be another member of the Moorlands Dog Rescue team. The home checker will fill in a Moorlands Dog Rescue approved form during the home check which will be extensive and thorough, but the rescue team member will make you feel very comfortable and the process will not be scary. At this point the rescue team member may even be able to show you some photos or a video of the foster dog that they have in mind for you. If the home checker is the dog's Key Worker this is a great opportunity to get introduced and to get to know each other, as you will be in constant contact throughout your time as a foster. If the person carrying out the home check is not the dog's Key Worker, the home checker will be able to give you some more information about the Key Worker. Providing that the home checker and the Moorlands Dog Rescue team feel that your home is suitable, the dog's Key Worker or a member of the rescue team will be in touch again to organise a suitable time to drop off your new foster dog.

On the pre-arranged date, the dog's Key Worker or a member of the Moorlands Dog Rescue team will drop off your foster dog. If you have another dog or dogs in your home, the Key Worker will ensure that there is a controlled greeting between the foster dog and your existing dog(s). This is absolutely vital as will you only get one chance to introduce your existing dog(s) and your new foster dog to each other. The rescue team member may come alone to do the controlled greeting, or may bring another team member or volunteer with them. The Moorlands Dog Rescue team member or Key Worker will give you specific advice on what to do during the first few days with your foster dog and will only leave when you feel totally comfortable for them to do so.

Your foster dog's Key Worker will be in touch regularly to check on the progress that your foster dog is making, to answer any questions and to coordinate any timings that need to be considered.

After your foster dog has settled a little, Moorlands Dog Rescue will start to create and publish rehoming posts about your foster dog with a view to finding them a suitable forever home. We will update you if your foster dog has any potential homes and will listen to any thoughts that you might have about the potential home. Whilst your feedback is considered, valued and respected it is the Key Worker's sole responsibility to make any homing decisions.

After your fostering period has finished, you can either choose to foster another Moorlands Dog Rescue dog straight away, you can have a little break and start again when you are ready or you can choose not to offer your home to another foster dog. You are only committing to foster a dog for the amount of time it takes before that dog finds their forever home.



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What Should I Expect?

Moorlands Dog Rescue look after many different dogs. Some are owner surrenders which means that the owner can give the rescue lots of information about the dog before they are fostered or re-homed, but sometimes the rescue will have dogs in their care who have been found as strays or taken from pounds meaning that although we will take every step to match you with a dog that suits your household, the rescue might have limited information about the dog's background or needs. Some previous owners have put lots of time and effort into training the dog but unfortunately many haven't.

Some foster dogs will be very scared and nervous when they arrive. They may not want to socialise with you and will seek out a safe space to hide, rest and de-stress. They may want to run away and they may look for every opportunity to flee. Even dogs that have been house trained and settled at their previous home will find a new environment extremely stressful, for this reason you should always expect that there may be toilet accidents whilst the dog is calming down and settling in to temporary life with you. They may whimper, cry or howl, they may be sick or have diarrhoea. They may display nervous behaviours such as licking their lips and shaking. These are all completely normal behaviours to see when you first meet your foster dog and you will need to be as resilient as possible and trust your Key Worker when she/he tells you that this will get better and that your foster dog will start to calm down after a little while. Foster dogs may also chew things around the house. This does not happen often but you must be aware that Moorlands Dog Rescue do not offer insurance in these situations and it is a risk that comes with fostering. We would strongly advise that you never leave your foster dog in situations whereby they could damage something expensive or that is not easily replaceable.

In most cases these situations will not occur and your foster dog will be relatively easy to look after, however when you commit to fostering a Moorlands Dog Rescue dog you must be aware that this could happen whilst the dog is settling down and you need to be prepared to deal with it if it does. It is so important that you are honest with yourself about whether you can be patient and handle these situations if they were to occur because if your foster dog needs to move again, this will only create further stress and worry.

What Happens If It Doesn't Work Out?

Moorlands Dog Rescue do not have back up foster homes or kennels that dogs can quickly be taken to, so if you cannot continue to look after your foster dog we do need as much notice as possible so that we can either try to find an alternative foster, or book space in a boarding kennels. If you are struggling, sometimes Moorlands Dog Rescue might decide that it is better for the dog to go on to a new foster or to the kennels. This decision will always be made with the best interests of the dog in mind. Before you commit to offering a foster dog a home, you do need to be sure that you are prepared to put as much time, energy and commitment as possible into it.

What Are The Costs?

Fostering with Moorlands Dog Rescue has been set up in a way that it has minimum financial implications to fosters as possible. All food is provided by the rescue along with essential items that you will need to care for your foster dog such as collars, harnesses and name tags. Any veterinary care that your foster dog may need is also covered by the rescue.

The only costs that you may incur as a foster are associated transportation costs if you have to take your foster dog to or from the vets, or if you choose to take your foster dog with you on an outing.

Fostering Checklist – Am I Ready?

Before applying to foster a Moorlands Dog Rescue dog, please ask yourself the following questions. If you answer "no" to any of these questions, it would be advisable to contact Moorlands Dog Rescue to talk fostering through with a team member before filling in the application form.

Am I ready for:

- Feeling incredibly rewarded for being an integral part of a dog's happy future?
- Possible toilet accidents around the home?
- Possible crying and whimpering?
- Lots of licks and kisses?
- Walking twice a day?
- Cleaning up dog hair from carpets, floors and soft furnishings?
- Quiet and content cuddles?
- Barking at visitors to the home or sometimes possible barking at not much at all?
- Being part of a supportive, like minded community of rescuers?
- Lots of laughter and entertainment?
- Taking lots of photos and gushing about your new friend to everybody you meet?

What Can I Do To Help During The Foster Dog's Stay?

- Take photos and send them through to your foster dog's Key Worker. This is not mandatory but it is really helpful as these photos can be used when Moorlands Dog Rescue are advertising for a home for your foster dog. The more photos and videos that your Key Worker has, the more chance your foster dog has of finding the right home. Photos and videos that capture your foster dog's unique personality are particularly important because they will help to emphasise their character on the homing posts that the rescue will publish.
- Give honest and objective feedback to your Key Worker as often as possible. Please remember that the rescue team members are volunteers and have their own careers and businesses to manage at the same time, so they may not reply to every photo or update quickly, but this information is always really important as it gives your foster dog's Key Worker vital information about the type of home that would be most suitable for your foster dog and it also gives them indications of any developmental needs that your foster dog may have, meaning that their future home will know that they need to work on this going forward.
- Spread the word by telling anybody you bump into with your foster dog that they are available for adoption. Post on Facebook or Social Media that you are fostering a dog for Moorlands Dog Rescue and that they are available for adoption. Sometimes you will not be able to post on social media, such as in welfare situations, however your Key Worker will make sure that you know this ahead of time. Share the rescue's Facebook Posts too as the more exposure the rescue has to the general public, the better chance your foster dog and other dogs in Moorlands Dog Rescue's care have of finding their forever home.

What Happens When I Have To Say Goodbye?

Saying goodbye is the hardest part of fostering, but it helps if you keep in mind throughout your fostering experience that you are just temporarily looking after the dog for it's future forever family. You may be sad for the first couple of days after your foster dog leaves but there are always dogs that Moorlands Dog Rescue will need you to foster and the next foster dog will help you to miss your previous foster dog less. The more foster dogs you have, the less it hurts to say goodbye. Saying goodbye doesn't get easier, you just become better at it. One of the great things about Moorlands Dog Rescue is our rescue group that once you become a foster you will be added to. This means that you can keep track of your foster dogs and see how they are getting on in their new home. You might even bump into your old foster dogs from time to time and it is an amazing feeling to see them so excited to see you.

What Happens If I Can't Say Goodbye?:

Many times the rescue have had 'failed fosters', which means that a person has had every intention of fostering a dog but fell in love and wanted to adopt their foster dog. We will always give you first refusal on adoption, but it is really important that you let your Key Worker know as soon as possible if you are considering adopting so that they do not waste any of their time looking for a potential home as well as the time and hopes of the general public who may be excited at the idea of giving your foster dog a home.

Frequently Asked Questions:

"I am not retired and I don't work from home, does this mean I cannot foster?"
Not at all. Different working patterns are considered and each case is looked at individually. The sad truth is that without foster homes to go to rescues cannot offer places for dogs. Moorlands Dog Rescue have a really understanding and flexible approach to both foster homes and forever homes that have unique situations. This means that our dogs are given every opportunity to have a future, but without compromising the quality of their foster or forever home.

"I have another dog who is not great with all other dogs, does this mean I cannot foster?"
Not necessarily. The more information you can give to us about your set up as well as your resident dog during the application process, the better. The rescue team are very experienced in working with animals and would never knowingly put your dog, or your potential foster dog in any danger. Every necessary step would be taken to make sure that your home situation and the foster dog are a good match.

"I have a cat. Will that be an issue?"
Homes without cats are preferred and would take priority over homes with cats however some of our existing foster homes have resident cats and this has worked well. Of course if we know that the dog has lived with cats before then this will give us a good indication that your home might be a good match for them. Sometimes though, we don't have any information about the dog's past and they have yet to be assessed with cats, so we would not want to risk putting your animal in any danger.

"What happens if a foster dog gets ill whilst in my care?"
If your foster dog gets unwell during their time with you, it is important that you notify your Key Worker immediately. Your Key Worker will judge the situation and may ask you to take your foster dog to the vet. We are really lucky to have fantastic support from our local Veterinary Clinic who have open surgery appointments, booked appointments and even an out of hours surgery appointments available should there be an accident and your foster dog requires urgent medical attention.

"Can people with children foster dogs?"
This depends upon lots of different variables. If a dog in our care has been assessed around children then this would not necessarily be a problem, however the more information you can provide in your foster application form about the children and your home, the easier it will be for the Moorlands Dog Rescue team to match the dog and your home up together safely.

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