



Hounds First Sighthound Rescue

At the heart of Hounds

Registered Charity 1152540

Fostering Guide

Thank you for offering to foster a Hounds First dog.

Foster parents like yourselves allow us to rescue more dogs, and we appreciate your kindness in opening your home to dogs in need.

By providing a foster home, you're providing a stable, loving environment for a dog that may have been neglected and abandoned. You may also be providing socialisation, and basic training, that will give our dogs a great start to their new life.

What do you need to be a good foster carer?

This bit is simple-

- Love
- Care
- Understanding
- Patience

General Guidelines

Please read & review the following important guidelines:

1. All Foster Homes agree to care for their foster dog until Hounds First finds the dog a forever home. If, for any reason you have to hand your foster back before a home is found then please be aware that it may take a few days before an alternative foster home can be found.
2. Hounds first will send you food for your foster dog.
3. Hounds First will pay the veterinary costs for neutering, vaccinations, microchipping, and general ill health or injury, however Hounds first will not pay for treatment that is needed as a result of negligent care by the foster carer. **ALL NON URGENT TREATMENT MUST BE PRE APPROVED.**
4. Hounds First will post the foster carer worming tablets and flea treatment for the dog. Please do not get it from your vet.
5. Foster Homes are asked to keep in close contact with Hounds First and update Hounds First on a weekly basis. If the foster carers have any questions or concerns then they must contact Hounds First as soon as possible.

6. Some dogs will come to Hounds First with an unknown veterinary history. We will get the Hounds First dogs booked in for vaccinations as soon as possible; however it is advisable that the foster carer also keep their own dogs vaccinations up to date.
7. If you are planning a holiday, please notify HF as far in advance as you can. We will need at least 3 weeks to arrange for alternative care for your foster dog. If you want to take your foster dog with you, even for just a weekend, you **MUST** notify Hounds First beforehand.
8. Do not leave your foster dog with anyone else outside your immediate home checked family without prior approval.

Getting your home & family ready for fostering

Fostering is a commitment that will affect your entire household including your pets. Here are some tips to ensure that fostering will be a positive experience for you and your family.

Supplies

You should have the following on hand before your foster dog arrives:

- Food & water bowls: it is best to have separate bowls for your foster dog.
- Food & treats: We will send you a contribution towards feeding your foster once they are with you if needed. But please get some food in before your foster arrives. We recommend that you feed your foster dog on a good quality dried food or a raw diet. Please also provide chews for your foster dog to keep their teeth clean.
- Bed: It is good if a foster dog can have its own bed to curl up in. An old single duvet in a plastic base can be a cheap way of doing things. The plastic bed then can be disinfected when needed and the duvet washed. Remember, sighthounds like home comforts.
- Toys: It is a good idea to have a few toys just for foster dogs which are put away once your foster has gone. This reduces the chance of you resident dogs getting upset when the foster steals their favourite toy.
- Collar & lead: Some dogs will come into foster with no belongings. It is always worth having a spare collar and lead just in case your foster dog hasn't got one when you collect it. Please also have a spare id tag with your full address and phone number engraved in it. Hounds First will send you an ID tag with our details on it too. This should stay on the dog at all times, even when he/she goes to their new home.

Introducing your Foster Dog to your Home, family and pets

DOGS: Introduce your resident dogs to the foster dog on neutral territory. It is a good idea to take them out on a walk together before you allow them in the house together. Always introduce them on lead, preferably with one adult per dog. Allow the dogs to say hello and sniff each other. Give all of the dogs lots of positive reinforcement. If one dog gets aggressive or one seems scared then separate them, comfort the dogs, and slow down the pace of the introductions. Don't force things if they are not immediate best friends, sometimes it takes a few days for dogs to accept each other. Sometimes, dogs just don't like each other. By giving them each attention separately, and making them feel safe about their bed, toys, and food, you can minimize any tension.

CATS: Please make sure that your cat has his/her own area to escape, preferably a room where the foster dog will not be allowed to go. Introduce your foster to your cats on lead. Do not let the dog off lead until you are happy with how he/she is reacting to the cats. Hounds First can never guarantee that a dog is cat safe, even if they have lived with cats before.

-After introductions have occurred, keep in mind the following tips:

- Never leave the cat & foster dog unsupervised, even if it looks like they are getting along.
- Make sure your cat has places to hide where the dog can't get him/her.
- Never teach the dog to look for the cat. Do not make an issue about the cat. If you make the cat seem interesting then the dog will become interested.
- The cat may swipe at the dog or hiss in order to correct. This is fine and tends to make the dog back down, however keep an eye on interactions to ensure the cat doesn't injure the dog.

With all your resident pets, allow the animals to accept one another in their own time. Never push them toward each other or force interaction. Many animals become companions and playmates, whilst others simply tolerate each other.

Children: Please introduce your foster dog to your children on lead. If you have children Hounds First will not place a dog with you that is known to have issues with children. However introductions should still be done carefully. Some dogs just cannot work children out! Children and dogs can be best friends, but friendship comes from mutual respect.

Please make sure that your children know to give the foster dog space. Please discourage cuddling and holding the dog by its collar. Do not allow the children onto the foster dogs bed, and do not allow your children to dress the dog up or tease it.

Children should not walk the foster dogs, as, even if the dog is easy to walk, the child may not be strong enough to hold the dog if it decides to chase something, or if someone tries to take the dog off the child.

Working with your foster dog

While your foster dog is living with you, you can provide some basic training along with lots of tender loving care. We do not expect you to take the dog to formal training classes; however we would appreciate it if you could work on the following:

- Socialisation: Socialisation is so important. It involves taking your foster dog out and exposing it to different situations including meeting new people, dogs, cats (if cat safe), children, cars, bicycles and anything else you can find.

If you have a shy dog, this can be a big task, and should be approached slowly, however it is essential.

- Food aggression with other dogs is a fairly common trait which should be worked on, however food aggression towards people is not acceptable. If your foster dog is growling when you are near his food, you need to work on correcting this behaviour. If you have a food aggressive dog then please ring us for advice asap.
- House training: It is pretty normal for dogs to have one or two accidents when moving into a new environment and a house trained dog will quickly regain good habits. However if your foster dog isn't house trained then this is something that you need to be working on. Treat the foster like you would treat a puppy. Take them out to go to toilet when they wake from a sleep, after meals and every hour or so throughout the day. When they toilet outside reward the dog. This can be with a treat, and a 'Yes, good boy' or using a clicker and a treat. If they have an accident in the house then just clear it up. Don't scold the dog and do not make an issue of it. Biological washing powder is pretty handy here!
- Manners: Jumping up, pulling on the lead and stealing food are all habits that need discouraging. If you need advice on these issues then please contact us.

Hounds First only recommends positive, reward based training.

What to expect.

- The unexpected! No dog is the same.
- The dog to be shut down at first- many dogs are very stressed when they first move. The dog that you see on the first day is not the dog that it actually is.

- Escape routes- The dog may search for ways to escape from your home. It may try to slip out a door as you open it, jump out of a window, it may also try to slip its collar, so please double lead the dog at first. Be on your guard.
- Unsettled nights- the first night in the home is a scary time for a dog. Be prepared for whining, barking and general noise. Don't shout at the dog, do not tell it off, but adjust your routine for the first night, you may need to sleep downstairs for the first night, or let the dog sleep with yours. If the dog needs to be crated then put the crate somewhere warm and cover it with a blanket to make the dog feel safer. We can give further advice on this.
- Chewing- Some dogs just chew because they like chewing. Pups chew because they are teething, but some dogs chew because they are stressed and it is a way to work through their stress. Give them a nice raw bone, or a raw hide chew to chew on and if they chew anything in your home ignore it, don't tell the dog off, just keep them away from it in future.
- Accidents in the house- as explained earlier this is pretty normal, especially for entire dogs.
- Thieving- As the dog settles its true personality will come out, and like many lurchers it may be a thief! Do not leave food on the sides, and do not put toxic foods in low cupboards, as they may open the cupboards and steal the food.
- Separation anxiety- as far as the dog is concerned its owners has disappeared and now someone else is looking after them, they may become worried that you will leave them too and become anxious when left. You need to show them that you do come back. Let the dog settle in first and then start going out. Start with short trips out and then build up to longer trips. Do not make a big deal about going out, just go. When you come back don't make a big deal of it, just walk in make a coffee and then give the dog a stroke.

If the dog is demanding when you are home and expects you to stroke it when it whines then don't! By responding to their moans you can almost train the dog to become a needy hound! When they whine don't stroke them. When they stop give them some attention.

- No recall! Keep the dog on lead for a good couple of weeks until you can be sure that the dog has started to settle and trust you. Then find a secure area to test recall- ideally keep the dog on a long line at first. Do not let the dog off of lead in an unsecure area.

- Expect the dog to change- Dogs take a while to settle. New behaviours can appear as they start to feel safe, or if they feel stressed. If you are concerned about any of them please call us.

The Facebook page

Please join our facebook page. You will be able to 'meet' other foster carers on there and potential adopters.

Adoption Procedure

The Hounds First team work hard to find the proper match for each of our dogs, to ensure that our dogs get the right home for life. All applicants must go through the Hounds First adoption process. Dogs cannot be adopted by friends or family of the foster home directly, all applicants must be properly screened. It is important for you to understand our adoption procedures, however, since you will get questions about it. The adoption process is as follows:

1. The applicant fills out an application using our online application form which is found on our website.
2. A member of the Hounds First team reviews the application and calls the applicant for an informal phone interview. Hounds First will then arrange a home check.
3. A member of the team will review the home check paperwork, and contact the adopter to let them know if they have passed.
4. If Hounds First feel that the home is right for the dog then we will put the adopter in telephone contact with you, you can then answer any further questions and arrange for the applicant to meet the dog.
5. Please let us know if the meet goes well. We will also contact the applicant to ask their thoughts.
6. The Hounds First team will then make a decision on the adoption and we will contact both you and the adopter to let you know if the adoption is going ahead.
7. You can then arrange for the adopter to meet the dog and collect if all goes well. We will send you all the adoption paperwork which needs to be completed at handover.
8. Hounds First will then do a follow up call at 48 hours and two weeks and two months. We will also arrange a post adoption home check at six months. You are also welcome to keep in touch with the adopters.

We will remain in contact with the adopters for the rest of the dog's life, and if for any reason the adopter can no longer keep the dog then we will take it back into our care. A Hounds First dog is always a Hounds First dog.

Contacts

You can email us on houndsfirst@yahoo.co.uk or phone us on:

Rachel 07710 608951

Tracie 07525 491972

Please remember we have families and work so you may need to leave a message, however we will return your call as soon as possible.

If your dog has a medical emergency in the middle of the night then please phone. However if we don't answer then don't worry, please just get the dog to the vet!

Thank you.