



**RSPCA Manchester
& Salford Branch**

Registered Charity No. 232255

Guide to Cat & Kitten Fostering



Who are we?

There are 160 branches of the RSPCA in England and Wales, of which we are one. Each is an independent, separately registered charity responsible for rehabilitating and rehoming the animals that are rescued by the National RSPCA. Typically these animals have been rescued from cruelty, neglect and abandonment, which means all our time, effort and resources are dedicated to the neediest of society's animals.

Our branch does not have its own animal rehoming centre, instead we use a network of foster carers and two private boarding facilities to help us care for and rehome our animals. This means that our volunteers play a vital role in enabling us to help over 400 animals each year find safety, love and care.



What is fostering?

A foster carer is someone who temporarily looks after an animal in their home making sure they meet the animal's day to day care needs.

We need a variety of foster homes to help us meet the different needs of the animals that come into our care:

Short Term Care – this is when we place adult cats into foster for 2 to 4 weeks prior to admission to our cattery. This time allows us to see if the animals have any health concerns that could spread to the cats awaiting adoption in the cattery (e.g. cat flu). Once the cat has served its 'quarantine' in your home we will then move them out for rehoming. This option is suitable for people who do not have other cats in the home, who may be out at work during the day or would like to commit to short term placements only.

Kittens – wherever possible we prefer to care for kittens under 5 months of age in a home environment so they can receive lots of attention, be closely monitored for signs of ill health and get used to everyday life experiences such as cooking smells, washing machines, the vacuum and TV. The maximum kittens can be left alone is 5 hours.

Nursing Queens and Kittens – we always look after nursing queens in foster homes to ensure we give them as much support as possible during this crucial time and can closely monitor and socialise the kittens. The maximum they can be left alone for is 5 hours.

Supportive Care – we sometimes have cats that have additional support needs that we cannot meet in the cattery. Typically they are cats that have had to have a leg amputation or jaw wired following an accident and need to be given medication and extra TLC. Placements are usually for around one month and suit people who are experienced with giving medicines and caring for sick animals. You must be able to give us access to the cat during the day so we can take them for check-ups.

Longer Term Placements – some cats simply don't cope well with living in a cattery and struggle with the confinement and close proximity to other cats or the loss of regular attention. On other occasions a cat may have been waiting in the cattery a long time for a home so we want to give them respite and some home comforts by placing them in foster care. There are also elderly cats that are better off in a cosy, quiet home waiting for a forever home.

Why Foster?

Our foster carers tell us that caring for a rescued animal and seeing them develop in vitality and confidence is incredibly rewarding. Changes can be small and slow in coming but knowing that it is down to your patience, compassion and care is such a joy. Whilst it can be hard to let your foster animal move on for rehoming there is no better feeling than seeing them happy and settled in their new home. Your contribution to fostering can often be the difference between life and death and you can't put a price on that.



Who We Need

Essential criteria:

- **Have some prior knowledge of cats** e.g. in the family home, previous ownership/fostering.
- **Have a suitable space in the home** for the cat to live in separately from any other animals in the home, where applicable.
- **All animals in the home are neutered and up to date with their vaccinations**, where applicable.
- **You must be willing to adhere to each animal's care needs** as prescribed by the branch/veterinary surgeon.

- **Be available at some point during the working day** to allow staff to deliver/collect animals and supplies.
- Be available at some point during the working day to discuss with staff your availability to foster and how your animal is getting along.
- **Live in Salford, Trafford or Manchester area.**
- **Own transport or willingness to take a taxi** to the branch's designated vets in Whalley Range in the event of an out of hours emergency occurring e.g. Sundays and evenings. N.B Out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed.
- **If you rent you must have written permission from your landlord** to have foster animals.
- **Must be able to keep doors and windows closed** to avoid escapees (this can sometimes be difficult in shared housing).

Desirable criteria:

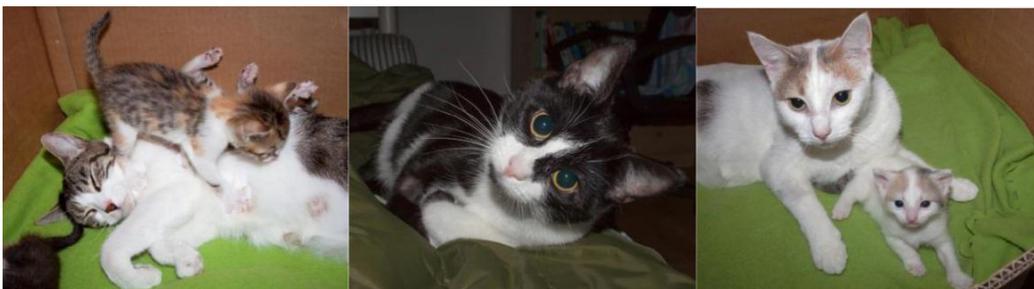
A basic knowledge of cat behaviour. Recommended reading: www.icatcare.org or *Cat Sense* by John Bradshaw ISBN 9781846145940.

- **Experience of administering medication.**

Our Commitment to You

We will help you look after your foster animal by:

- Supplying all the essentials you need to care for your animal e.g. litter, litter trays, food and bowls, toys, beds and scratch post.
- Transporting your foster animal to and from the vets during office hours Monday to Saturday.
- Paying for all the veterinary treatment the foster animal requires.
- Offering support to you Monday to Saturday 9.00am to 6.30pm.



Is fostering for you?

- **Not all cats are litter trained.** We will provide you with support and guidance on how to litter train your foster animal but be prepared for mess!

- **Cats and kittens scratch, claw, leap and climb!** These are all natural, and in some instances essential, behaviours. If they did this to you or your soft furnishings could you cope?
- **We sometimes encounter very talkative cats.** In fact we've known cats be relinquished or returned to us because they are so vocal. Would a chatty cat bother you?
- **Foster cats and kittens cannot be let outside.** Will you be able to make sure windows and doors are kept shut so there are no escapes, even in the middle of summer?
- All the animals are treated for fleas and worms prior to coming to you, or in some cases on arrival. **It is possible that the fleas could still be live** (they have to bite the animal to die) or you may find flea dirt in their coat or the worms may still be being excreted. We know this isn't pleasant so want you to know it could happen.
- **Saying goodbye can be heartbreaking.** Sometimes the reason you are saying goodbye is not because there has been a happy ending. Sadly the animals we take in have often come from horrible circumstances and we are battling against the odds. When we make the decision to put an animal to sleep it is done in consultation with our vet and after much consideration. It is rare this takes place, but we want you to be aware it can happen.
- **Whilst rare, some cats and kittens may carry diseases or infections** that have not been diagnosed prior to admission. If your foster animal turns out to be carrying something contagious and your own animals are affected then we will pay to treat your animals too and remove the foster animal.
- **When your foster animal is ready for adoption we need you to provide us with photographs** that capture the animal's beauty and some written words that give us an insight into their personality, likes and dislikes and ideal forever home.

What Next?

If you feel you meet our criteria and would like to take your enquiry further then we need you to complete a volunteer application form. Once we have received the completed form we will arrange to come round to meet you in your home and discuss with you what animals are best suited for you to care for. Please remember we do need you to be around at some point during office hours, start or end of the day is fine. Please email rpscamcr_salford@btconnect.com for the form to complete. We look forward to hearing from you!