

Giving up your pet – Frequently Asked Questions



At Raystede, we take into our care and rehome over 1000 animals every year. With a dedicated team and exceptional facilities, we will aim help your pet to find a suitable new home and a fresh start, whilst supporting you at this difficult time.

Initial inquiries

I think I need to rehome my pet, how do go about this?

There are many reasons why people consider giving up their pets.

If your pet's health or behaviour are contributing to your decision, we recommend getting some advice from an approved behaviourist or vet. An adjustment in your pet's care, routine or training may mean that you do not need to rehome them after all.

However, we understand that sometimes unforeseen circumstances mean you are unable to continue to care for your pet. At Raystede, we respect what a difficult but responsible decision it is to find your pet a new home. We offer a non-judgemental service and always have the animal's best interests in mind.

We are here to help. Please contact us to tell us about your pet and your circumstances; complete a form on our website or telephone our Rehoming Team on 01825 880468 (9am to 4pm, seven days a week). All visits to Raystede to give up animals are by appointment only.

Is using a rescue centre better than selling or advertising online?

You may be considering rehoming your pet privately, or through buy and sell websites or social media. This is fraught with risks and it is difficult to be sure they will be well looked after. Giving your pet to a reputable rehoming centre is a much safer option for all involved. It can take longer to find a suitable rescue for your pet, but the behavioural, veterinary and rehoming expertise of centres like Raystede are worth waiting for.

Is there a cost involved?

There is no fee for giving a pet to Raystede. As Raystede is a charity, some people choose to make a donation to help towards their pet's care. Whatever you feel able to give is very gratefully received, thank you. You are welcome to donate when you bring your pet to us, via our website or by calling our Customer Services Team on 01825 840252.

Will you definitely help with my pet?

We will carefully discuss your pet and circumstances to see whether coming to Raystede is the best option for you and your pet. There are some species which we are ordinarily unable to accept, or it may be that coming to Raystede would not be appropriate due to your pet's behaviour, breed type or health, for example. If this is the case, we will do our best to provide other safe options for you to explore.

Please be aware we may not be able to help immediately and may have to add your pet to a waiting list.

Would you be able to collect my pet?

We understand that transport and time commitments may make it difficult for you to bring your pet to Raystede. If you have transport difficulties, we are happy to discuss our collection service with you.

Peace of mind when leaving your pet with us

What happens to my pet while they are at Raystede?

Once we have agreed to accept your pet, we will book you an appointment with our Rehoming Team to tell us more about your pet and complete the paperwork. The more detail you can give us the better to ensure we find the most suitable new home. We like to receive copies of your pet's vaccination card and a health history from your vet. We also encourage you to bring along some of your pet's personal belongings to help them settle in at the centre.

All animals receive a high standard of care, including a cosy area to themselves, a nutritious diet, access to safe and appropriate exercise areas and toys, and plenty of attention from our dedicated team of staff and volunteers. Dogs receive training and exercise according to their needs, and small animals are safely bonded with a suitable new companion. All animals receive a health check with our veterinary team and any necessary treatments including neutering, vaccinations, flea/wormer treatments, and microchipping, where applicable.

Will my pet cope in a rescue environment?

Every pet copes differently when placed in an unfamiliar environment; we are here to help your pet feel safe and comfortable. We have secluded, peaceful areas for those who need more time to adjust. Most animals settle quickly and enjoy the extra attention, cuddles and playtime on offer. Despite our best efforts, on rare occasions animals can struggle at Raystede and for these animals we can arrange for them to relax in a suitable foster home until they are adopted.

How will you find my pet a new home?

Our team will get to know your pet to build a thorough assessment, including their individual likes, dislikes, habits, and requirements for their future home. This will include, for example, whether they could live with children or other animals, ability to be home alone and how long for, exercise requirements and accommodation.

Any potential adopter must meet your pet's individual requirements. Raystede's matching process is very thorough; we use a robust series of questionnaires, interviews, photos, and home visits if necessary, to ensure an ideal match for both the animal and the adopter.

Most animals find a new home within a few weeks, whereas others take longer to find a home best suited to their individual needs. Regardless of how long they are with us, the care and support each animal receives does not differ.

What happens if my pet cannot be rehomed?

We aim to find every animal a permanent new home. However, sometimes we have to humanely put to sleep animals who are too unwell to be rehomed, who have such challenging behaviours that mean they cannot safely be rehomed, or who are of a banned breed and we are legally obliged to. This decision is never taken lightly.

Saying goodbye and moving forward

Saying goodbye and giving up your pet can be really upsetting, not dissimilar to going through a bereavement. If you are struggling with coming to terms with your decision, please talk to someone. Organisations like the Blue Cross Pet Bereavement service, Samaritans or Mind can help you deal with your loss.

It is important to understand that you will legally pass ownership of your pet to Raystede and will have no further rights in relation to them. This is a confidential service; please be aware we cannot share details of new owners, nor can we provide updates. You are welcome to track your pet's progress on our website; this will describe the requirements we are seeking from their future home, and state when they are reserved to a new family.

If the circumstances leading to your pet's rehoming change while they are in our care, please get in touch; we can discuss what has changed and how best to move forward. Raystede will always act in the best interests of the animal.