



FAQ ABOUT FOSTERING AND ADOPTING

These have been put together to help you get answers to some of the things we are asked most often. We hope you find the answers to your questions here, but if you have any others, please do contact your Regional Team, who will be delighted to help.

I work full-time/shifts, will this be a problem?

This is an interesting and complicated question because if your work means the dog will be left 10 hours a day, 5 days a week and is being left in a crate all day, with someone just letting it out at lunchtime, then yes, that is a problem. Rescue dogs often need more time-investment than a dog you may have raised from a puppy, and we don't always know enough of their history to pinpoint those needs, so building a relationship is essential, and that needs time, your time. But if you have other people in the home, maybe a partner working just a few hours each day, children coming and going from school, or perhaps you work from home, these will all be taken into account. If you have a foster dog, it is because YOU have been approved to care for one – not a neighbour, not a dog-walker, not your Mum who can pop in occasionally. As a rough guide, we don't like our dogs to be left alone for more than around 4 hours on any regular occasion, but we know that some days things happen where you may need to be away for longer, so if the dog is safe and has access to water – and you don't mind if they have the odd accident - we understand that. However, it is worth noting that we have approved 'joint-fosterers' too – where Mum, for example, can take the dog for odd days where home-workers have to pop into the office, or have appointments. We simply home-check both of you. **Dog-walkers/day care centres are not acceptable during foster** as we can't vet them for our dogs, which may have specific needs that are still being discovered and understood, and you should be sure that any you intend to use later are suitably licensed and insured, as many are not.

I don't have a garden/I live in a flat/my garden is communal, does that matter?

You might think this could exclude you from having a dog – not so. We know that many people have dogs who live in flats or don't have gardens, maybe if they live in towns or cities, but we also know that these dog owners will actually make more effort to walk their dogs for toileting reasons. If you are on the 8th floor of a high-rise building with a dodgy lift, we won't place a dog with medical needs that can't walk up and down stairs, but, again, it is all dependant on the actual dog being placed. And if you are in accommodation with communal gardens, please remember that there may be other dogs/children/pets there too, so we don't want to place a dog with you that can't manage those situations safely. We all try to maintain control and avoid reactive situations but accidents can and do happen, so some forethought to avoid difficult situations in advance is always advisable – we assess the risks and eliminate all that we can.



My garden only has a low fence – does it have to be high?

This is more likely to be an issue than the previous points. We live in sad times when dogs are regularly stolen, so a higher fence can help to keep them safe but we also have some very sprightly Frenchies, who would think nothing of scaling 3-4 feet high barriers. Ideally, we want a secure space, front or back garden, it doesn't need to be both, if a dog is going to be allowed out on its own for toileting and relaxing. Gates also need to be secure so there can be no accidental escapees. This will be discussed at your home visit, because sometimes some very simple remedial actions can turn an unsafe garden into a secure one, but beware of adding mesh/chicken-wire etc to fences as this offers superb purchase for a dog to use for climbing purposes - and yes, some are clever enough.

I have a pool/hot-tub/pond

More homes have hot-tubs now than in previous years because we have learned to love relaxing in the garden. Thankfully, most have hard top-covers for them and these are ideal for keeping your dog safe. Ponds and pools though are a huge risk and MUST be fenced off securely or drained when not in use. Soft covers are actually more of a risk to a dog than none at all, as they will be trapped under them if they slip in. As a rule of thumb think 'adventurous toddler' – your Frenchie may explore, may climb, may jump, just as a toddler would. If you can secure it against a very inquisitive toddler, you will be well on the way to making it dog-safe too. Due to their construction, most Frenchies can't swim, so never take chances; too many drown each year because of tragic accidents in pools and ponds.

I have another dog/other pets – can I still be considered for a foster dog?

Of course you can! As long as you don't have a cat that is a dog-killer or a rabid rabbit that will bite off its paws! Most of our fosterers have other dogs and pets, so it is just about matching the right dog to the right home. Many of our dogs have come from homes with other dogs and/or pets so they actually prefer to be matched with the same. We won't place unneutered dogs of opposite sexes together, for obvious reasons - unless neuter is within days! – but if we know that a dog has previously lived with cats/dogs/fluffies and we have seen this with our own eyes, there is no reason not to place that dog with similar. Do be aware though that just because your cat is accepting of your dog in your home, it may be less so with a newcomer, so some perseverance may be needed. We can offer advice on this, but patience and realistic expectations are key to harmonious relationships.



I have young children – does this mean I can't foster/adopt?

No, not at all. As with other dogs and pets, where a dog has been with a family and seen by us to be relaxed and happy, we will place dogs with families. We won't put a 16kg bouncy unit with you, or a small toddler could be traumatised by being constantly but accidentally bowled over, but we get older, calmer dogs, and sometimes puppies too; there are usually options.

I can't drive and/or don't have a car – will that make a difference?

Not always. We ask you to ask yourself what you would do if the dog needed emergency care in the middle of the night; your local vet might be across the road but the out of hours one may be miles away. If you have a relative/partner/friend that you can rely on to get the dog to a vet when needed, even in the wee small hours, it need not be a problem. All of our decisions are based on practicalities, so it will be discussed with you because no one wants a huge taxi bill for taking a dog to a vet at 2am, the vet bill alone is enough.

I can't afford the Adoption Fee – is that a problem?

Yes. French Bulldogs are not cheap dogs to care for, ask anyone who has one. We would advise that you save for one before fostering, then you will be ready to adopt if you fall in love, which you undoubtedly will. They can be very picky with their food and this alone can be costly. We endeavour to make all dogs as medically sound as possible prior to adoption, including vaccinating and neutering, but there may still be the odd vet visit needed post-adoption for simple things such as upset tummies, annual vaccinations, yeasty ears, allergies; these are not cheap visits for any breed and if you find that you can't afford the Adoption Fee it may be that a French Bulldog is not the breed for you. And as for Insurance costs ... don't even get us started on those! Pre-existing conditions won't be covered and so although we offer 5 weeks free insurance that can be continued, it won't be cheap, so consider how you will manage any unexpected costs. There is usually an excess on insurance policies too, just like cars. The Adoption Fee is also the only way we can guarantee funding to pay our vet fees and many dogs cost us far more to mend than their adoption fee, so it is essential for our survival. Or you could take on a Golden Oldie – they still have lots of love and energy but have a vastly reduced adoption fee, but they will still have vet needs, so do try to make decisions of the head, not just of the heart; it is easy to do the latter with such an adorable breed.



And so to sum up

We base all of our decisions on a case-by-case basis. Phoenix FBR has a very cohesive, democratic Team and whether it is passing someone and their home as suitable to foster, deciding whether we can help a dog, or where that dog will go, it is all always decided by group discussion that considers all factors; we know that real life can't always be black and white, there are shades of grey, which is why we often re-write our procedures and policies, because life is always changing and we are all always learning; nothing is ever written in stone. If you have read through all of the above - **AND the Fostering Guidelines, so that you know what we expect of you, and what you can expect from us** - and you can honestly say with your HEAD that you could offer a great home to a dog in need, then apply to foster; leave your heart out of this decision for now, that will be captured from the moment the dog enters your home!