



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 a member of the Phoenix FBR Team, who will be delighted to help.

Do I need to be over a certain age?

Yes. **We don't allow anyone under the age of 25 to adopt** (over 21 is sometimes allowed, with discretion) because a dog is a huge responsibility and very few people under that age will have had the opportunity to care for a dog and understand all the needs, including costs. That said, we know that young people need to be able to gain experience of their own, other than helping with pets in the family home, and so we will allow foster-only applicants from the age of 21. Until 25 years old no one may adopt but fostering is a great way to gain experience with support and without serious cost implications. This decision was reached as a result of lessons learned.

I am not 'young' anymore/have a disability and many rescues consider me too old/unsuitable to foster/adopt, will you?

This is probably one of the saddest things that we hear and the answer is categorically not! Of course, we will consider any issues around mobility and capability, and we will not place a puppy that bounces off walls with an octogenarian who wants a peaceful life. But many dogs come to Phoenix FBR due to losing their beloved owners and these dogs often make perfect companions for those not in the first flush of youth, or with restricted abilities. We do like older and impaired applicants to have family back-up for support, but we stay in touch too, to be sure things are not getting too much. Each applicant, dog or human, is considered on a case-by-case basis, without prejudice.

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/or 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 when 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 the foster period** 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 some 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 often make more effort to walk their dogs, if only 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 if you 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 are a huge risk though, and MUST be fenced off securely or drained when not in use. Soft covers are 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 and Frenchies definitely know their own breed. We won't place unneutered dogs of opposite sexes together, for obvious reasons 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. Another thing to bear in mind though is that if you take in a foster dog and they don't get along with your resident dog/cat/child, or vice versa, we may not be able to uplift the foster dog immediately. It may take a few days, so please keep this in mind and consider how you would manage this situation ahead of a dog arriving.



It is a good idea to have a 'Plan B' for managing the foster dog. Before the dog even arrives at your home, think ahead: what if your dog/cat hates the newcomer? Can you separate? Do you have a crate or pen?

Collection of a dog in foster cannot usually be instant, so you should consider how you will manage the dog if this worse-case scenario happens. The Team will be available on the phone for support, but the dog will have been placed with you based on what you have told us and how you can manage the foster dog, and a rapid uplift is likely to be unfeasible, so a Plan B is useful as a safety net.

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, but it may not be ideal. 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 our decisions are based on practicalities, so it will be discussed with you in advance, 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/Vet Fees – is that a problem?

Yes, sorry. 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 understand all dogs medically as much as is possible prior to adoption, and all dogs will be vaccinated, flea and worm treated, but there may still be the odd vet visit needed post-adoption, including neutering, or 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 some dogs cost us far more to mend than their adoption fee covers, so it is essential for our survival. You may decide instead to be a serial foster, helping to mend a broken Frenchie before they go off to a Forever Home. Or you could take on a Golden Oldie – they still have lots of love and energy but have a vastly reduced adoption fee, although they will still have some 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.



How will the dog get to me?

Wherever possible and by preference, a Phoenix Team member will deliver the dog to your home so that we can ensure safe introductions, as necessary. However, as we are a UK-wide charity, it may be that the dog is not close to you and neither is a Team member. In these cases, we will endeavour to arrange 'road-trains' using approved volunteers to get the dog to you, but wherever possible we will ask you to undertake some of the travel as part of your commitment to the dog.

So how long before you get a dog, once you have had your home visit?

We make all 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. Life is always changing and we are all always learning; nothing is ever written in stone. However, if you have a cat, another dog, or children, in any combination, we must be sure you have a dog that is safe for your home and everyone in it, which can sometimes take more time. If you stay in touch with the Phoenix Team to remind us you are still available, we will have you in mind when a dog is surrendered that will fit your home. Please be patient and kind though, checking-in is good but persistent badgering can be exhausting, and most of our volunteers have full-time jobs and families of their own too.

And to sum up

If you have read through all of the above - **AND the Fostering & Adoption 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!

Simply go to <https://www.phoenixfrenchbulldogrescue.org/register-to-foster-or-adopt>