

Fostering cats and kittens



Every year we see the numbers of unwanted and abandoned kittens and pregnant cats increase. We are so full of kittens and pregnant cats that stay in our care for months it becomes extremely difficult to take in cats from our waiting list due to lack of space.

We therefore look for experienced temporary foster homes to care for some of our kittens, mums and kittens and long-term cats or older cats needing some TLC, until they are old enough or ready to find permanent new homes. This gives us the space to take in and rehome more cats in need as they can come in and go out quickly once neutered, vaccinated, micro-chipped and vet checked. We also love to see some of our long-term cats benefiting from time to time in a home instead of living in a cat pen for too long. This gives us a better idea of what they are like in a home environment as some long-term cats do not cope very well in pens and don't show off their personalities! This helps with their adoption prospects.

Everyone has different experience with cats and can help with different age groups depending on their home set up.

What does fostering involve?

You must be realistic about your facilities and circumstances. If you have your own dogs or cats, they must be well socialised and fully vaccinated and be able to cope with strange animals living in their home and territory.

If you are going to foster kittens you will need to have a spare room that is not currently being used to keep them in so they have their own safe space. This room will need to be free of clutter and anything that can be damaged or chewed such as computers, electrical cables, ornaments etc. Kittens will climb up and on everything - including curtains and blinds so have a good look around the room to see what you can clear out so it doesn't get damaged.

You also need to consider that some kittens/cats may not be housetrained so may go to the toilet where they are not supposed to until they learn where they are allowed to go. Therefore if you have carpet in the room you may need to consider if this is acceptable or look at the possibility of covering the carpet with a piece of cheap vinyl or something easy to clean that you can roll up and put away when you want to use the room for guests or something else.

Adult cats will also need to stay in one room for the first few weeks so they can adjust to your home but after that they can have access to the whole house **but not must not be let outside.**

Children must be of an age where you can be sure that you can manage newcomers that may be anxious or need space and time to settle and adapt safely-for all concerned. You also need to ensure that the fostered cat/kittens is will not be let outside by your children and all visitors.

You need to consider how much extra time caring for cats, especially kittens is needed, as they do make a mess! You will need to regularly feed them, clean the litter trays often and keep the room clean and tidy.

You will need to be able to drive the cats/kittens to our vets in Ivybridge for emergency treatment 24 hours a day and bring them to Gables for routine appointments. Appointments are normally held at Gables on Mondays and Thursdays. **Therefore you must live locally.**



What can I foster?

There are three main categories of cats that need fostering and we will work with you to establish what you will be able to cope with.

1. **Kittens** that have already been weaned onto solid food and just need caring for until they are old enough for adoption. Generally they have their first vaccination at nine weeks old. At this point they will come back into Gables for vaccinations and then neutering and then rehoming.
2. **Young kittens and their mother.** Mums and their kittens just need caring for in the same way, although the mum does most of the work with feeding the kittens! Kittens can start to be weaned from four weeks old and will naturally start to eat solid food when they are ready. They can start to be separated as soon as they have started eating by themselves but very gradually by a few hours a day so it is helpful if you have two spare rooms - but if not we can take them all back to Gables to start the weaning process.
3. **Older or nervous adult cats** that need TLC and socialising.

What support will I receive?

Don't worry you won't be left alone! Our staff will keep in touch and make sure you have all the support and supplies you need. We will provide toys, food and food bowls, litter trays, litter, blankets, scratching posts, flea and worm control etc. but you will need to come to Gables to collect them.

We will provide feeding, weaning and medication charts with dates and times so you can be confident in what you are doing. We will also contact you to arrange appointments for all treatments and vaccinations, and also when to bring them in for rehoming.

You must be committed as once an animal is in a foster home we do not always have a ready alternative, although we will of course always endeavour to remove an animal as soon as possible if things are not working out. Generally you will need to commit to at least 5 weeks for litters of kittens, nine weeks to care for a mum and litter of new born kittens or longer if it is an adult long-term cats.

All kittens/cats are rehomed via Gables as we have waiting lists of people looking for kittens or specific adult cats. You may find that your friends and family come over and become attached or want one of the kittens. They will in this instance need to contact Gables to register their details and we will rehome at our discretion. Where we look at the safety of the roads in the location of the home as well as other factors. We also have a waiting list of people looking to adopt so they may have already been matched up with a family. We try and rehome all of our kittens in pairs as it is much better for their welfare.

If you would like to become a foster carer please download the application form from our website complete it and send it into us. Upon receipt of your application we will be in contact to arrange to visit you in your home to discuss fostering further.

Thank you for your interest in fostering at Gables.

