

CHINCHILLA ADOPTION GUIDE



Finding your new companions

Step 1: Submit your application form (available on our website) and photos

We will need to see photos and measurements of your chinchillas' accommodation. If you are looking to adopt a companion for your existing male chinchilla/s, please also send proof of neutering. Please email these documents to: smallanimals1@raystede.org

We will consider your application and contact you if we need a few more details or to invite you to Raystede for a chat. If you do not hear from us, we have everything we need for now, thank you.

Step 2: Wait for the magic to happen

Once you have registered with us, please keep an eye on our website for new arrivals and contact us if you feel someone might suit your home.

When animals arrive at Raystede, we get to know them through behaviour and medical assessments. Our expert animal care teams carefully use this information alongside your application to see if the match could be a success. Finding the perfect pet can take time. Please be patient; they will be worth the wait.

Step 3: Visit Raystede

We will invite you to Raystede as soon as we have found any potential matches for your home. We will discuss the animals' background, health and behaviour. This sometimes requires a few visits. You will need to provide photo ID, proof of address, and if applicable, written landlord permission to have a pet in your property.

Step 4: Take your new pet home

Once we have found your perfect partner, we will book an adoption appointment; our Rehoming Team will talk you through caring for your pet. Your adoption fee will help us continue our work to give animals a better life.

Rehoming criteria

Our housing requirements aim to ensure the best welfare standards for chinchillas. Our team are happy to offer advice in purchasing or adapting your set-up to provide the best home before adopting.

Chinchillas are rehomed in pairs or small groups

Chinchillas are social animals and naturally live in groups. We only rehome chinchillas in pairs, unless as a companion for an existing chinchilla. Raystede provide a bonding service which we can discuss. Males must be neutered.

A pair of chinchillas need a cage of at least 152 x 90 x 60cm / 5 x 3 x 2ft

The cage should have plenty of shelves, branches and boxes inside. Any shelves or platforms should be covered with a suitable substrate such as newspaper and hay or Carefresh. They should have lots of places to hide in and jump on. Remember, chinchillas require a minimum of 1 hour exercise per day outside of their cage.

Peace of mind when adopting

- All chinchillas are health checked by a vet
- Male chinchillas are neutered

You will also receive:

- A comprehensive adoption pack and appointment with our Rehoming Team to ensure you have everything you need to care for your new chinchillas

Follow-up advice from our expert Small Animals Team

Thank you for your adoption fee, which will help to cover some of our costs:

- Adoption fee: £30 each
- Bonding fee, if applicable: £20

The average daily cost of care for all small animals at Raystede is in excess of £300.

Raystede Centre for Animal Welfare, The Broyle, Ringmer, East Sussex, BN8 5AJ.

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Chinchilla care

Owning and caring for chinchillas is great fun and very rewarding, but it is a big responsibility and a long-term commitment. Did you know chinchillas can live on average 15 – 20 years?

Getting your chinchillas' diet and environment correct is the best way of ensuring a long and healthy life. Here are some guidelines for offering your chinchillas the best care:

- **Chinchillas are sociable animals and need to live in pairs or small groups.** A single neutered male can live alongside one or more females.
- **Chinchillas are nocturnal**, so they are active at night and sleep during the day. As a companion animal, they are more suited to adults and older children.
- **Chinchillas like to sit and play at different heights** in their enclosure so wooden shelves hooked on to the sides are ideal. Also, thick branches of willow or hazel make good climbing frames. A bedroom area for snuggling should be made from a sturdy wooden box; but bedding inside is not necessary.
- **Chinchillas are sensitive to heat, light, damp and draughts.** The enclosure should be situated in a suitable location to prevent health problems. They are prone to heat stroke due to their extremely thick fur.
- **A daily dust bath** (using chinchilla dust/ sand) is needed to keep their coats clean and free from grease. Chinchillas only groom themselves when feeling completely relaxed, safe and stress free.
- **Chinchillas require a minimum of 1 hour exercise per day outside of their cage.** This should be done under supervision in a safe room (with no wires or other animals).
- **Check your chinchilla for signs of injury or illness every day and seek veterinary advice if necessary.**
 - Check teeth are not becoming overgrown.
 - Check coat and skin for signs of bald patches, sores or lumps. Their fur is so thick they cannot get fleas.
- **Clean the house and toilet areas regularly.** The base of the cage should be lined with newspaper or substrate to collect droppings and urine.

Diet

Chinchilla's teeth grow continuously throughout their life. The teeth need to be worn down every day by eating hay. Failure to eat the right diet will quickly result in serious dental disease.

The diet should include:

- **Hay:** the best diet consists almost entirely of good quality hay and dried grass forage, available at all times.
- **Complimentary feeds:** this should be in pellet form with balanced nutrients, rather than a muesli mix, to prevent selective feeding.
- **Twigs** from hazel or fruit trees should be provided to wear down the teeth.
- **Treats:** chinchillas cannot break down sugars and have sensitive stomachs. Feed maximum of one per week: ½ dried apricot, 1 raisin, a few blades of grass. Avoid commercial treats which are high in sugars.
- **Fresh water** in a bowl, available at all times.