

# RAT 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 rats' accommodation. If you are looking to adopt a companion for your existing male rat/s, please also send proof of neutering. Please attach these documents to your online application form. If necessary, you can email the documents to: [smallanimals1@raystede.org](mailto: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 rats. Our team are happy to offer advice in purchasing or adapting your set-up to provide the best home before adopting.

### Rats are always rehomed in same-sex pairs/groups or a neutered male with one or multiple females

Rats are social animals and naturally live in groups. We only rehome single rats as a companion for an existing rat – Raystede provide a bonding service which we can discuss. Males must be neutered before rehoming.

### Rats need a cage of at least 152 x 90 x 60cm / 5 x 3 x 2ft

There are several different cages for sale that are suitable for rats. Hammocks, ladders, tubes and various toys all help to make the cage as fun as possible. This in turn can help prolong the life of your rats.

## Peace of mind when adopting

- All rats are health checked by a vet
- Male rats 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 rats

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: £15 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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## Rat care

Owning and caring for rats is great fun and very rewarding, but it is a big responsibility and a long-term commitment. Did you know rats can live on average 3 – 5 years?

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

- **Rats are highly social animals** and should always live in same sex groups or a neutered male with females. A group of rats is called a 'swarm', 'pack' or 'mischief'. It is possible that one male and female rat can have over 1 million descendants in less than 2 years. Male rats must be neutered.
- **Male rats (bucks) are more laid back** and once they grow out of juvenile stage they are only too happy to curl up on our lap or sit on your shoulder and watch the world go by.
- **Female rats (does) are busy bees, always on the go**, doing housework or getting into mischief. They are sociable and love attention but if there is something exciting happening elsewhere, they have to explore.
- **Rats are very loyal.** They will give you a lot of companionship and fun, but you must be dedicated. If you cannot give a rat at least 2 hours playtime and interaction a day, perhaps rats are not the companion for you.
- **Rats are highly intelligent;** they will come when they are called, can be taught tricks and quickly learn commands.
- **A rat's sense of smell and hearing is great, but their eyesight is poor.** Always talk to your rats when entering their cage, especially if the rat is pink-eyed.
- **Rats urinate on the go**, so it is important to keep the cage and bedding clean to prevent respiratory problems. They also have scent glands on the soles of their feet to leave scent trails to mark their territory.
- **Provide plenty of clean, warm bedding** such as paper substrate or fleece blankets. Wood shavings should be avoided as they give off aromatic oils which are harmful to rats and other animals.
- **Check your rats 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 mites, bald patches, sores or lumps.
  - If your rat is snuffling or sneezing, they may have a respiratory infection.

## Diet

- **Complimentary feeds:** This should be in pellet form with balanced nutrients, rather than a muesli mix, to avoid selective feeding.
- **Fresh water** available at all times.
- **Fresh foods, in moderation:** cooked potato, broccoli, chicken, fish, cooked or raw pasta, sweetcorn. Unsweetened breakfast cereals. Rice, bananas, grapes, yoghurt. Scrambled or boiled eggs.
- **Treats:** If treats are given avoid commercial treats which are high in sugars.