# SHEEP ADOPTION GUIDE

## Finding your new companions

**Step 1: Submit your application form** *(available on our website)*
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.

Before your application is approved, the Equine Team must approve your sheep accommodation via a home visit.

**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 sheep. Our team are happy to offer advice in purchasing or adapting your set-up to provide the best home before adopting.

**Sheep are always rehomed small groups**
Sheep are herd animals. We rehome our sheep in small groups as many of our stock have been together for multiple years.

**Sheep need a secure enclosure with constant access to shelter.**
The enclosure and shelter should be as large as possible.
- As a minimum, they should have a large barn allowing 25 square feet per sheep, with lots of ventilation and dry straw in addition to 4 feet high no-climb fencing that is square (otherwise their heads get stuck).
- The outside space should be a minimum of one acre per 5-6 sheep.

## Peace of mind when adopting

- All sheep are health checked by a vet
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 sheep
- Follow-up advice from our expert Equine Team

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

Adoption fee: £40 each
Sheep care

Owning and caring for sheep is great fun and very rewarding, but it is a big responsibility and a long-term commitment. Did you know sheep can live on average 12-14 years? The oldest sheep lived until 28!

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

- **Sheep are very social animals**, living in herds in the wild. Ewes tend to form maternal groups for life. Being gentle creatures, they also get along well with goats. Sheep do not like to be alone - if an individual needs to come in from the herd for any reason bringing a companion should be considered to reduce stress.

- **Sheep are suspicious by nature**. Sheep spook easily if yelled at or rough handled but if you repeat their names and talk to them when feeding or grooming they become affectionate playful companions.

- **Sheep must always have access to shelter**. A large barn makes a fine shelter, allow at least 25 square feet per sheep and be sure there is good ventilation.

- **Clean, warm dry bedding** should be provided all year round – straw works well, this should be cleaned out daily. Having hard standing is ideal to help with foot maintenance and in wet weather.

- **Shearing** - sheep should be shorn once a year in Spring, we tend to do ours Mid May-June, depending on the weather

- **Flystrike** - a careful eye must be taken to check for signs of discomfort or blackening fleece, eventually leading to open wounds with maggot infestations. It is important to apply a chemical treatment through the warmer and warm/wet months. It is also useful to crutch out the sheep to keep the rear end clear from faeces.

- **Check your sheep for signs of injury or illness every day and seek veterinary advice if necessary**. Signs to look out for with could include injury, loss of appetite, lack or droppings, change in weight, laboured breathing or change in demeanour.

- **Routine health care**:
  - Annual health check and vaccinations with a vet
  - Regular poo samples taken, and a worming program followed
  - Foot maintenance – hoof trimming should be carried out every 3 months on average.

Diet

- **Fresh water** in sturdy buckets should be available at all times.

- **Feeding** - as a general guide: they are extremely hardy and can survive on a diet of cellulose, sugars or starch. Ideally they should have 8 hours of grazing, with little grain as this is high in fat. And sheep tend to suffer from weight problems. When hay is given Timothy hay is the best and alfalfa is useful for those that are sick or debilitated.

- **Mineral blocks** - it is important to have mineral licks in the sheep enclosure and a Rumevite block for winter months.