

Healing Paws



Animal Rescue

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Risk Assessment (UK) Policy

Healing Paws Animal Rescue – Our Vision

To promote humane behaviour towards animals, in particular on the island of Zakynthos, by providing appropriate care, protection, treatment and security for animals which are in need of care and attention by reason of sickness, maltreatment, poor circumstances or ill usage.

To educate the public in matters pertaining to animal welfare in general and the prevention of cruelty and suffering among animals.

Our ultimate goal is to build a fully licensed shelter on the island of Zakynthos, where we can continue with our vision.

Our Aims

To re-home our rescued dogs into a safe and loving environment where they can mutually enjoy a good quality of life with human beings and other animals. We assist adopters by taking dogs/cats into foster care, preparing them for European travel and arranging transport to their new homes across Europe.

The well-being of our animals, adopters and fosterers is of paramount importance. Our team of volunteers, plus our transporter, aim to provide the best possible care to ensure that every animal is well-prepared for its next forever home in the UK.

Management of risk

Healing Paws Animal Rescue seeks to ensure that every animal rehomed to the UK from Zakynthos is done so in line with UK law. The following actions are taken:

Banned Breeds

Healing Paws Animal Rescue does not rehome dogs to the UK for which there is a breed ban in force. Under current UK law the following breeds of dog are illegal: Pit Bull Terrier, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino and Fila Brasileiro.

Veterinary Treatment

Prior to travelling from Zakynthos to the UK, each animal receives all the vaccinations that are required by law in the UK. All of the animal's vaccinations, and the dates on which they were administered, can be

found in the issued Pet Passport which accompanies it from Zakynthos. In regard to a dog, these include: Rabies, Canine Distemper, Hepatitis, Leptospira, Parvovirus, Parainfluenza, Tapeworm and Parasites (fleas).

All dogs are implanted with a microchip. By law, this must be registered in the UK by the adopter.

All adult dogs are neutered prior to travel. In line with advice from our vets, the male puppies are not castrated before about 8 months of age, the female puppies are not spayed until after their first season.

All dogs receive a veterinary health check 48 hours before travel and an Intra-Trade Animal Health Certificate (ITAHC) completed by an official veterinarian.

Adult dogs are tested for tick fever and Leishmaniasis. Puppies are tested for tick fever and Leishmaniasis based on the latest vet protocol on the age at which to test puppies; this is currently at around 12 months of age.

The main tick disease on Zakynthos is Ehrlichia. This, along with anaplasmosis, babesiosis & borreliosis (Lyme Disease) are all found in the UK and are treated with simple antibiotics if diagnosed early enough.

Application to Adopt

Potential adopters complete an online Application Form in response to dogs advertised on our website and dedicated Facebook page. The form seeks to collect detailed information to establish the names/ages of occupants in the potential home, previous/existing dog experience, working hours (if applicable) and the lifestyle they can offer to a rescue dog, amongst other important details.

At Healing Paws Animal Rescue we make every effort to match potential adopters with the 'best' dog for them, taking into account experience, lifestyle, living arrangements and personal preferences. Our volunteers have lots of experience in helping potential adopters to choose the most suitable dog.

Child Policy

We do not home our dogs or puppies to families where there are children under 5 years of age unless there is an existing dog in the home; these applications will then be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, homes with children under 10 years, the parents must have previous experience of owning a dog as an adult. Again, these applicants will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis based on the dog and family circumstances.

Potential adopters are provided with advice regarding the introduction of a rescue dog to children, and vice versa.

Home Check

A comprehensive home check is carried out by an independent home assessor, who is experienced and often already involved in animal rescue. The thorough home check ensures that the garden is secure and that the right dog is matched to the right family. During the home visit, the home assessor is on-hand to answer any questions, gain additional information and offer valuable advice to prospective adopters. The home check form is then returned to us for appraisal.

In line with data protection, all personal data is deleted from the home checker's system on return of the form to Healing Paws Animal Rescue.

Adoption Contract

All adopters are issued with an Adoption Contract following a successful home check.

The Contract sets out what is expected of adopters when agreeing to adopt a dog from Healing Paws Animal Rescue. This includes that they agree to neuter their puppy at an appropriate age. We acknowledge that the adopter's vet is best placed to advise the adopter on neutering and, in some instances, it is not advisable to castrate a male dog as any fears and anxiety can be made worse by removing the testosterone hormone.

Adopters must reply with their agreement to the Adoption Contract email to accept its terms and conditions.

Pre-adoption Advice

Prior to adoption, Healing Paws Animal Rescue provides a wealth of information in an effort to prepare adopters; this advice is in the form of a 'What to Expect' document. Once the adoption is finalised, adopters are also issued with a 'Frequently Asked Questions' document. If applicable, we also provide an 'Adolescence Guide' to aid those adopters who are adopting an older puppy.

Adopters are encouraged to be patient and understanding; the 3-3-3 rule attached to the foot of every email, and also within documentation, clearly sets out what adopters can expect of their rescue dog in 3 days, 3 weeks and 3 months. The 3-3-3 rule is general guidance – every dog is unique and will adjust to its new life differently. Therefore, adopters are encouraged to take cues from the dog, taking things at its own pace.

Post-adoption Support

Healing Paws Animal Rescue offers a range of aftercare support to adopters.

If we do not receive an update about the newly-adopted dog within a few days of its arrival, the Admin team make contact with the adopter to check that everything is going well. If a problem is evident, the Admin team are then able to offer advice and support, and take immediate action if necessary.

Adopters are invited to join the private Facebook group 'Healing Paws.....Home at Last' where they are able to share photographs, videos and ask for general advice from existing adopters within the group. All submitted posts are subject to Admin approval; should Admin be concerned about the content of a submitted post, the adopter will be contacted privately to discuss the nature of the post prior to approval.

Healing Paws Animal Rescue has a volunteer behaviourist available to support those who need assistance in this area. We are also able to recommend behaviourists and trainers with whom the rescue has previously worked with.

Rescue Backup

Healing Paws Animal Rescue accepts that, for a variety of different reasons, an adoption may not work out to be successful. Should this transpire, we do encourage adopters to be patient and understanding in the first instance, especially as it can take some dogs longer than others to settle.

In the event an adopter feels that the dog needs to be rehomed, we ask that adopters give Healing Paws Animal Rescue 10 days to find alternative arrangements.

If an adopter has experienced a change of circumstances, we will do our utmost to find an alternative home, be this through foster care initially or via advertisement for a new adopter.

Healing Paws Animal Rescue is committed in providing lifetime rescue backup. Under the terms of the Adoption Contract, adopters are required to inform the rescue immediately if they are no longer able to care for the dog or wish for it to be rehomed.

Adopters who wish to surrender their dog are required to complete a detailed Rehoming Form and also a Surrender of Ownership Agreement which signs the dog back over to the ownership of Healing Paws Animal Rescue.

Post-adoption Health Concerns

Healing Paws Animal Rescue follows up with adopters with regard to the neuter status of their dog/s; date of neutering is recorded for administrative purposes.

The Admin team respond promptly to any report of a medical issue concerning any of our adopted dogs. The report is logged and advice/support provided. Regular follow-up is maintained via communication with the adopter.

All adopters are made aware of the small possibility that their dog may develop Leishmaniasis. Detailed information is provided, along with a comprehensive factsheet. Any dog we are made aware of who tests positive for Leishmaniasis after arrival in the UK is noted and follow-up/support is provided by the rescue team. (*See 'Veterinary Treatment' section above*)

Fosterers

Fosterers play a critical role in the process of rescue to potential rehoming.

All fosterers utilised by Healing Paws Animal Rescue are thoroughly home checked and sign/agree to a Foster Agreement.

Fosterers are selected on the basis of their experience, knowledge and ability to ascertain the dog's suitability for permanent adoption and, if so, what type of environment is appropriate for it in the long term. Most of our fosterers are existing, trusted adopters.

We ensure that any fosterers used by Healing Paws Animal Rescue have never had a dog removed from their care for any reason, or had expression of concern raised by a dog warden or RSPCA officer regarding welfare or behaviour. It is also a requirement that none of our fosterers have been convicted for any offence under the Dangerous Dog Act.

Any dog placed in foster is not owned by fosterer, they are on loan to enable a permanent home to be found and usually under behavioural assessment during this period. If a fosterer becomes unable to continue with the arrangement, for example, in the event of ill-health or a change in circumstances, the dog will be returned to us for re-fostering.

During the period of foster, the dog is owned by Healing Paws Animal Rescue. If the dog requires any veterinary input, this cost will be agreed and met by us.

We have third party liability insurance for our UK foster dogs. We are not able to provide home and contents insurance for fosterers and those undertaking this valuable work need to clarify with their insurer that they are adequately covered personally.

Insurance held by Healing Paws Animal Rescue will only cover the 3rd party liability aspects of fostering, and providing that the Foster Agreement is adhered to.

As a rescue we accept that it is not always in some dogs' best interests to be looked after by a fosterer, due to medical or behavioural issues that deem them unfit for rehoming at that particular time. In these instances, we work closely with various trusted sanctuaries where such dogs can be rehabilitated, for example, by restoring their health or addressing behavioural issues through therapy and training, teaching them to trust again and to become the best that they can.

Transportation

Transportation of our animals from Zakynthos to the UK is completely independent of the rescue. Healing Paws Animal Rescue utilises a DEFRA-registered UK and EU transporter who offers a safe, reliable transportation service by road in a specially adapted vehicle.

The transporter liaises directly with adopters to arrange collection from several designated locations in the UK.

Upon collection, the transporter provides the Pet Passport, which includes details of vaccinations and microchip. Some of our puppies and dogs exit the transport happily, whilst others can be scared; there is no way of telling how each will react. Therefore, adopters are instructed to use a slip lead or, if the dog is small enough, to carry them to the car, as they could potentially want to escape in fear. Once the dog is home, we advise adopters to take extra precautions to ensure the dog cannot escape when the car door is opened and to carry them into the home if possible.

Complaints Policy

Healing Paws Animal Rescue values the views of adopters and fosterers; we are committed to addressing any concerns or complaints raised as soon as possible. Please refer to the 'Complaints Policy' for full details.

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