

Kerry's Kritters Small Animal Rescue policies on animal welfare



Who we are and what we do

Kerry's Kritters Small Animal Rescue is an ethically run rescue in Upwell a small quiet rural village on the border of Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. The rescue is run from the home of Kerry which is a very large detached property surrounded by acres of land and farming fields.

Our mission is to help as many small animals as we can by giving them a fresh start in life after their bad start, we rescue rehabilitate and rehome as many small animals as possible, excluding cats dogs horses, farm animals, wild animals and dangerous wild animals, therefore we do not require a home office or any other form of license

Animals we aren't able to rehome due to behavioural or medical reasons are assessed by a trained qualified animal carer and a species appropriate veterinarian to determine if KKSAR is able to help the animal for the rest of its life and stay here as sanctuary spaces, or we may reach out to other reputable ethical sanctuaries if we felt they had better facilities and expertise that suited the needs of the animal better. We hold good report with other local rescues and shelters and believe if we work together we can help even more animals in need and greater communities with their pet care

We also help people of all community's by educating them on how to give their animals the best husbandry possible by various means, largely advocating for the correct up to date husbandry and best welfare practise needed to keep

domesticated animals happy and healthy, by sharing publicly on our social media platforms information sourced from reputable animal welfare establishments only I.e from the rspca website/blue Cross websites, rabbit welfare association & fund, Hamster welfare.com, the ferret welfare society etc.

Trained volunteers also educate members of the public on better animal welfare and husbandry at all of our fundraising events in the forms of handing out leaflets, care guides, pamphlets to members of the public, having posters and signs up advocating for the correct species welfare needs, being members of RWAF we are sent a large box of leaflets, signs and care guides to hand out to advocate for the best rabbit welfare which we do so at every opportunity. We also provide more links to other animal welfare organisations, or by giving talks and demonstrations on the best welfare practises I.e setting up appropriate and suitable enclosures for showcasing suitable housing, enrichment and diet. We are also regularly contacted by members of the public asking if they can come and see our animal enclosure set ups and rooms to better help them with their own pets husbandry and welfare requirements, which we highly encourage and is available freely to everyone, but is only done so on an ad hoc basis which never interferes with the animals natural routine or causes unnecessary stress.

Key Policies Kerry's Kritters Small Animal Rescue

2023

Only trained and qualified staff can complete admission assessments upon new intakes arriving.

- All rabbits & ferrets are neutered, vaccinated and microchipped before becoming available for adoption
- All social animals such as Ferrets/Rabbits/Rats/Mice/Gerbils/Guinea pigs are not rehomed as singles unless the adopters already have one or more of the same species and are able to bond them
- All new animals surrendered must submit to a minimum 2 week quarantine period away from other animals
- We follow the Rabbit welfare association & Fund (RWAF) and PDSA for our rabbit and guinea pig rehoming requirements
- Adoption process and home checks apply to see if the adopter will be the right match for our animals
- We stand against animals wearing clothing of any kind, especially prey animals such as rabbits and guinea pigs, harnesses included as we firmly believe prey animals should not be walked and only taken out of their environments for vets and grooming needs, further more harnesses and clothing cause huge amounts of stress and restrictions to the animal causing them to move in un natural ways/be in pain/feel trapped
- All animals are sentient beings who deserve our respect, animals are not props or to be used for our own entertainment in any way.
- We do not use small single hutches/enclosures for any animal
- All animals are fed a species appropriate natural diet as close to what they would get in the wild
- All animals are vet checked before becoming available for adoption
- We offer life time support 24.7 after adoption
- No animal is to be used for breeding purposes
- We do not agree with any form of using animals in sporting activities for human gain i.e Hunting, Horse and dog racing.
- We are only able to assist with domesticated species of animal (excluding cats, dogs & horses) and therefore advise members of the public to contact their nearest wildlife rehabilitation centre and or the RSPCA if they need assistance with non-domesticated species
- Adoption contract and fees apply when adopting an animal from us
- Any animal adopted from us **MUST** be returned to us if adopters circumstances change and they can no longer care for the animal adopted – We will always take back the animal
- All staff are subject to the required security checks such as a dba to check for animal welfare related offenses

About the rescue premises

The rescue operates from the property's attached annex building and garden only, with the main animal rescue room being in a very large double room with attaching clinical rooms for food preparation and storing, and toilet facilities for volunteers. We have appropriate signs for health & safety, fire safety and assembly points, coshh and first aid storage as well as ample storage space for

animal feeds and bedding. The rescue has a trade waste clinical bin which we use for all the old animal bedding and substrate when cleaning, this is a very large 800L bin so we are able to keep on top of waste management. (Please see our full Cleaning policies and procedures including waste management)

The main animal rescue room is in progress of upgrading to fit better facilities such as full glass and metal clinical cages that are easier to clean and therefore more hygienic than wooden ones which are slowly being phased out. This room houses only prey animal species such as small rodents rabbits, Guinea pigs and domesticated hedgehogs.

It is a fully brick and insulated room with its own power heating and water supply, windows and fire exit.

We then have a brand new purpose built area for predator species of animals such as Ferrets, found in the rescues back garden which is fully enclosed and secured by a 6ft fence and locked gates, with cctv facing the animal area, cctv signs up on both gates. All outside enclosures have their own padlock, all outside enclosures are made from strong wood and 16gauge wire mesh with bases fully laid on concrete slabs and waterproof roofs which make all predator and chew proof and safe from the elements. All enclosures have been professionally built by a local reputable company. (Please see our security & safety policy and procedures)

The predator area also has its own large storage shed with predator feed and bedding stored safely, and a quarantine area for predators, we do not cross contaminate between prey and predator species with any rooms, material or product including feed/cleaning products/bedding or substrate to minimise risks of stress or illnesses. Appropriate PPE is also required to be worn at all times when cleaning any animal enclosure or handling predator species. (Please see our Cleaning policies and procedures)

Education

We are wanting to offer training days on specific animal care such as handling experience days and placements for students from our local colleges, to further help the public with giving their pets the best life possible and also to veterinary staff members to allow them valuable handling experience of lesser seen animals such as Ferrets, domesticated hedgehogs, sugar gliders and other exotic species as we see a real lack in training offered to veterinary staff for these animals. Trainings are only offered by highly confident qualified animal care level 3 at least volunteers.

KKSAR also campaigns for better animal welfare rights and more regulations for better pet care. Especially getting involved with campaigns and lobbies governments in the UK, this is done by persuading politicians and other key stakeholders to support animal welfare by raising public awareness as well as by using scientific, public opinion

and other expert evidence, together with sound legal argument.

We campaign and publicly share petitions from Parliament pertaining to animal welfare rights such as animals sold in pet shops, unsuitable pet shop enrichment and enclosures sold, the unethical breeding of animals including rodent mills and puppy farms, better rights and newer laws and legislations for all domesticated species of animal, currently lots of laws are still heavily focused on cats dogs and horses or wildlife, we are trying to change that by actively protesting and advocating in many forms.

KKSAR'S operational, advocacy and campaigning work is supported and reinforced by its educational, legal, technical and veterinary professional staff who take a proactive role in our activities and who are experts in their own fields.

- Kerry and Chris formed KKSAR in March 2022, Kerry is a qualified animal carer having completed animal care & management level three gaining distinctions in her modules, at Shuttleworth college where they have a very large animal care side with facilities to

manage a wide range of species, amongst those there were reptiles, rodents, small mammals, exotic animal species, horses and farm animals to provide lots of hands on experience. Part of the course included animal nursing as a module taught by a veterinary nurse, in which Kerry was trained on how to give basic health checks to small animals and how to spot the signs of common illnesses injury or distress.

- Alongside the course Kerry completed 2 years work experience in a pet shop, therefore gaining valuable

experience with a wider range of species, upon leaving college Kerry has attained a number of skills and qualifications to further her career with animals such as an animal first aid course practical and theory, Kerry is very confident in emergency situations and acts fast in medical situations due to her training.

- Additionally Kerry also has Health & social care nvq 2, food hygiene level 2, COSHH training, Communicating effectively, health & safety at work training and fire safety training all complete with certificates.

- Kerry has owned various species of her own animals over a 20 year period, including dogs, ferrets, cats, rodents, rabbits, Guinea pigs, domesticated hedgehogs and reptiles so has a very broad experience with Ferrets being her specialist animal which she has a very wide range of experience with.

Christopher is our chairman of trustees, he is a by trade with over years experience in this field with years experience in other professional sectors, and has owned a wide range of species of animal over a 35 year period, Chris is our Rabbit specialist having

owned and cared for them for 25 years gaining lots of valuable experience and knowledge. Chris has received full training by Kerry on welfare needs and basic husbandry needs for all species of animal that KKSAR rescue and rehome equating to an animal care & management level 1 course at pass merit.

Chris is also a volunteer driver for vet runs and has undertaken an animal first aid course and has basic understanding of how to clean and health check the animals in KKSAR care if and when required under the supervision of Kerry only.

Callum is one of our trustees who is a skilled qualified carpenter by trade with

over 10 years experience, who helps to make all of our animal enclosures and ensures they are all safe and fit for purpose. He also makes hides and enrichment for the rescued animals, and has owned various species himself over a 9 year period mostly ferrets, dogs and rodents.

Callum is also a volunteer driver for vet runs and has been given full training on what to do in emergency situations and how to health check the animal but is always accompanied by a qualified animal first aider. Callum received basic animal care training to a level 1 course at pass merit.

Callum is always supervised by a qualified animal carer if and when asked to health check or clean animal, but very rarely will be asked to help with these tasks.

KKSAR is fully funded by the three trustees who have put thousands of pounds into the rescue getting set up, expanding and on the day to day running of the rescue.

All official animal care volunteers for KKSAR have animal care & management qualifications at varying levels, all undertake an animal first aid course and are subject to a DBS check to ensure they have no animal related offenses on their files before they are taken on as volunteers.

All animal care volunteers such as fosterers or in house cleaners are given full training by Kerry, up to date care guides on the

species they are caring for are given to fosterers in their Foster care packs at their induction which also includes the animals full care file, husbandry needs, any specific care needs and any other help or guidance we think they may need including what to do in emergency situations. We will use either our own guides or from reputable sources such as the rspca/the blue cross website, hamster welfare.com, the national ferret welfare society, the Rabbit welfare association & fund, guinea pig awareness & fund etc. (Please see our full fostering & volunteers policies and procedures for full details)

KKSAR seeks to help animals in most need by sickness, neglect, injuries or stray and

abandonment. We have strict criteria for this process to ensure we are helping the most needy and vulnerable. We ask members of the public to fill our short intake assessment form and send photos of the animal/s they wish to surrender along with photos of where the animal is currently being housed, only trained and qualified animal carers can make an initial assessment upon learning those details as to whether we are able to help.

We ask to see photos of the animal and their housing environment to get an idea of how they have and are being kept and the urgency of the situation. We are able to determine the urgency of help needed and sometimes can see straight away that the

animal needs immediate help. Some animals will have visible wounds, skin or hair conditions, living in unsanitary conditions and are clearly needing veterinary treatment. Only trained animal carers who are use to dealing with and seeing various injuries or illnesses would assist with initial assessments of any animals.

After an animals initial assessment if we feel we can help the animal they are then collected or dropped off to us and placed in quarantine for a minimum of two weeks to fully assess their medical and behavioural needs, in this time we will get them checked by a species appropriate veterinarian and given any medical treatment needed

including spay/neuters and vaccinations if required.

If an animal passes their assessment and quarantine period and are healthy and happy they will then be placed up for adoption on our website and social media platforms. Adopters must apply to adopt any animal and send the required evidence of their husbandry to us, we then home check and meet the potential new adopter and allow them to meet the animal they wish to adopt to make sure its the right pet for them.

If we feel we are unable to help a person with their animal usually due to it not being an emergency on welfare grounds, or on the rare occasion we are full with no spare

enclosures we will always give alternative reputable rescues who may be able to help the person in need or we may be able to temporarily take the animal in to then transport to another rescue to over take the care although this would be rare.

Only trained and qualified volunteers and trustees deal with the adoption process and decision making. (Please see our full Rehoming & Adoption policies)

Our vision

Our vision is to create a better world for animals where they're treated with compassion and dignity

Our purpose

Our purpose is to help all small animals in need and promote better animal welfare for domesticated species

Our values

Our values guide KKSAR on how we deliver our purpose, we do so with compassion, commitment and integrity

Our strategic objectives

Listed below are our strategic objects which focus on our main objectives for the next decade

- Over the next year we are still focusing on expanding and setting up better facilities for the rescued animals, such as replacing all enclosures with purpose built modern clinical enclosure suites to better house the rescue animals in the

main animal room. Aim to complete by the end of 2024

- We wish to also start working on an outdoor area for rabbits and guinea pigs in the next 2 years, to allow KKSAR to take in and rescue more of these species, rabbits being the third most popular pet in the UK means we sadly see lots needing our help and is the most likely animal for us to be asked to help by members of the public we have always got rabbits on our waiting list wanting to come in and receive our help but as we don't keep any animal in small hutches we quickly become full for this species. Aim to complete by the end of 2025

- Over the next 2 years KKSAR aim is to become better known and reputable not only locally but also around Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Norfolk to members of the public and other animal welfare establishments and with that to grow our core team of trustees and board members, we hope to recruit a trustee from a professional veterinary field and from another animal rescue background to further our expertise and efforts for animal Welfare. Aiming for the end of 2025
- KKSAR plans to higher our animal welfare advocacy further over the next

decade by attending fairs, schools and colleges or holding our own open days with planned timed talks and demonstrations on reliably sourced animal welfare practices and best husbandry methods, working hard to spread the word of who we are and how we can help members of the public, striving for the entire UK to know of the good work we do here. Over the next 10 years

- KKSAR is striving towards buying its own plot of land to build the rescue up on that in the next decade, where the rescue can have much bigger facilities for a wider range of species, Aiming to purchase land by the end of 2032

- Every animal in need by reasons of sickness injury neglect or abandonment will be helped by KKSAR and we will quicken our phone response time. By 2024
- The over population of companion animals will be lowered greatly by 2025 due to us neutering and spaying all rabbits and ferrets
- We aim to get un suitable enclosures for animals banned from sale in pet shops by the end of 2024

- We aim to stop pet shops being allowed to sell small animals in their shops by the end of 2026
- We aim to educate pet shops on better welfare and husbandry for small animals so that they can pass correct information on to their customers buying enclosures, enrichment, food and bedding only. Over the next decade
- By 2024 we aim to have our own educational booklets guides and leaflets based off information from reliable and reputable sources such as from those stated above, to have available freely for everyone to access from our website social media and fundraising events

- We aim to take a proactive role in advocating and protesting for better welfare standards in all animal care colleges and schools who keep domesticated species of small animals, aiming to have helped 5 colleges by the end of 2028

Our principles

KKSAR general principle is that all animals are sentient beings who feel pain and experience distress. We believe it is our responsibility to protect all species from any harm, suffering or illness by all reasonable methods available.

Significant pain and suffering can be caused by injury, disease, thirst, hunger,

malnutrition and inappropriate environmental conditions, genetics, and by boredom, fear and frustration. These effects are often intensified by keeping animals in cages and other threatening, restrictive, unnatural or under-stimulating environments.

Our policies

KKSAR governing council (the trustees) has developed policies which guide our work and are regularly reviewed. They can also be viewed by the public on our website to see how we view and treat any animals in our care.

KKSAR key welfare policies

- KKSAR is against the genetic modification and constitution of animals which may cause pain or suffering.

- KKSAR is opposed to the patenting of animals
- Under the animal welfare act 2006 we believe that everyone wanting to keep animals has a duty of care for the best welfare and husbandry to that pet
- KKSAR doesn't agree with confining animals to small spaces or enclosures unless it is in the animals best interest to do so
- We also recommend that as advised under Section 9 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 an owner of an animal must take all reasonable steps to ensure that they meet the following needs of the animal:
 - a) its need for a suitable environment
 - b) its need for a suitable diet
 - c) its need to exhibit normal behaviour patterns

d) any need it has to be housed with, or apart from, other animals, and

e) its need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease

- KKSAR strongly believes members of the public should be adopting from either us or other reputable animal rescue organisations rather than going to breeders when there is currently thousands of small animals in rescue centres all over the UK, Scotland and Wales as of 2023.
- KKSAR is against the display for sale of animals for commercial gain and strongly recommends that all retail outlets should ensure that any display of animals does not entice prospective animal owners to purchase without an understanding of the full responsibilities of animal ownership as this may

contribute to poor welfare and overproduction of animals.

- KKSAR is opposed to the owning of animals to better social status or for fashion trends.
- KKSAR strongly recommends neutering of all rabbits ferrets and other domestic animals under a veterinary advice
- KKSAR believes that breeding establishments should be properly inspected and regulated and that where possible for that species, all animals should be microchipped prior to sale or rehoming.
- KKSAR is opposed to the mutilating of animals for cosmetic purposes, such as ear cropping/tail docking/claw removal/ferret scent glands removal
- KKSAR does not believe in euthanasia for healthy rehoming animals.

- KKSAR is opposed to the keeping of animals in schools or colleges unless no other alternative can be used, we believe animals are better observed in their natural habitat rather than in a busy classroom environment where they are more likely to become stressed and injured therefore not displaying natural behaviours for the correct education.
- Any educational visits to KKSAR is done so as part of a structured animal welfare curriculum, animal welfare will always remain paramount and will not cause stress or unnecessary disturbances to any animal
- KKSAR is opposed to using animals in any sport fashion or entertainment purposes