

FRECKLE'S FELLOWSHIP

RESCUE + REHAB

Foster Guide



Introduction

Thank you for choosing to foster with Freckle's Fellowship!

What is Involved?

As a foster carer, you will be the bridge between rehabilitation and adoption for our rescued pigeons. We ask that you take our pigeons home and treat them like family. We provide you with support and cover all veterinary costs.

How Can I Start?

Once you have applied to foster via our application form on our website, we will organise a time to visit our shelter to find and collect a suitable match for your situation.

Am I Prepared / Elegible?

Whilst we work closely with fosterers to make a variety of situations work, we ask that fosterers do not foster pigeons from any other group or bring strays into care to ensure your foster pigeon is not exposed to new pathogens accidentally. Fosterers must agree via a signed document that they will not free-fly, breed, or otherwise exploit the pigeon(s) in their care.

Questions?

Any questions regarding fostering can be sent to info@frecklesfellowship.org

More information on fostering can be found on our website **www.frecklesfellowship.org**



Fundamentals

Why do Pigeons Need Fostering?

- They may be stressed in a shelter environment
- They need help socialising and trusting people
- They would benefit from special 1:1 care
- To free up space for new rescues






Did you know there are over 300 pigeon breeds? Our rescued pigeons come from all situations such as retired racing pigeons, lost exhibition birds, injured ferals, or owner surrenders.

Lots of people who foster have never looked after pigeons before, you will have access to our coordinators who can help answer any questions.

Travel and Communications

It is important that you have the capacity to visit our shelter in Camberwell and our vet in Burwood to collect your pigeon and access emergency vet care. We will notify you if a bird will require planned veterinary visits (eg, band cutting, surgery, etc.) before you agree to foster them. During travel, please have a secure carrier to keep your pigeon safe.

We ask that fosterers update us about our birds at least once a week (although we always welcome more!). Please look for photo and video opportunities; good footage can increase adoption interest!

Supplies

- A Medium-XXL dog crate
- Bedding (newspaper, puppy pee pads, towel, etc)
- Flat perches
- Feeding dishes (ceramic or stainless steel bowls)
- Toys (bells, crinkle balls, etc)



Reach out if you need materials provided. All the supplies you can provide yourself is a huge financial help to the rescue.



*Those with aviaries will discuss with us personally regarding requirements. If you would love to have a flock of foster pigeons long term but don't have an aviary yet, **we may be able to sponsor an aviary for you!**









For feeding, fosterers should use Peter and Gibbs, Green Valley Grains highflier mix, Thomastown Pet Produce super mix, or Lauckee Mills/Aus Pigeon Co Pellets. Pigeons are strict granivores and **do not** need fruits / vegetables in their diet, but leafy greens can be offered.

Because seeds do not have important vitamins and minerals, pigeons will also require an additional supplement. We recommend Aus Pigeon Co's PVM powder, which can be mixed with G9 grit and offered in a seperate dish, or mixed into the seed with a condiitoning oil. **Grit is optional**, PVM/Pink powder is not.

A poor diet can lead to deficiency, messy droppings, and/or weight loss. If you are concerned, please reach out for advice.



Maitenance

Household Risks

Practice caution with the following:

Windows + doors
When the bird is out, make sure all windows/doors are securely shut to prevent escape and injury.

Fans
When the bird is out, turn all fans off

Other animals
Do not let other animals and pets interact with the pigeon

DO NOT use/have the following:

Scented candles/aerosols, etc
May release toxic fumes that can kill your bird. Deodorant/perfume may be applied at distance from your bird.

Non-stick cookery
Toxic fumes are emitted at high heat, use stainless steel equipment instead

Panacur / wormout gel
These items have oxfendazole and/or fenbendazole. Compounds in the albendazole class are toxic to pigeons and should not be applied

Cage Cleaning

Daily **Weekly**

- Replace food/water/grit
- Rinse out bowls
- Change bedding
- Scrape droppings off surfaces
- Scrub ALL cage surfaces including the bars
- Clean dishes, perches, toys, etc with F10 / similar veterinary disinfectant
- look for rust
- Vacuum in / around the cage

Some activities listed as daily may be done every 2-3 days depending on cage size.

Cleaning only takes 5 - 30 minutes of your day!

Contact

If you notice any of the following, please notify us immediately:

- Frequent vomiting
- Not eating
- Not toileting
- Lethargy
- Other abnormal behaviour



Emergencies

If you are cannot reach out to our partnered vet or us, and your bird's life is at significant risk, please go to your nearest vet clinic so they can be stabilised. It is good to know your closest practice so you can prevent panic in emergencies.







Zoonotic Diseases

Even though most diseases that infect pigeons do not infect humans, some are zoonotic, meaning they can be transmitted to humans. Common diseases with this potential include psittacosis, salmonellosis, and paramyxovirus (PMV).

Although it is possible you may contract these, it is unlikely if basic biosecurity protocols are practised. This includes washing hands, changing bedding, and keeping the space clean. If you have a weakened immune system due to pre-existing conditions, you may be more susceptible to contracting a zoonotic illness. Freckle's Fellowship quarantines birds for 4 weeks and carefully checks for signs of disease, but it is possible symptoms may occur after this period. If you are concerned you have contracted a disease, please contact your doctor ASAP.



Adoption

Foster Failing

Many fosterers will “foster fail” and choose to adopt their bird(s)- which is completely okay! Fosterers are held to the same standards as adopters and must sign our adoption contract and pay the adoption fee.

If you would like to adopt your foster pigeon, please reach out to us ASAP so we can take down their listing.

Saying Goodbye

Adoption: is bittersweet when your foster pigeon gets adopted. During the adoption process, we may organise a video call so the adopter can ask any questions before seeing the bird in person. If this is successful, we will organise an adoption time where you will deliver the bird and say goodbye so they can move into their forever home. Be happy that you helped your foster be prepared for this next step in their journey at Freckle’s!

Once the foster period has ended, we send out a short form for fosterers to fill out about their experience and the bird.



Thanks for fostering with Freckle’s Fellowship!