

Campaign For a Better Life For Rabbits & Rodents

Monday 1 March, 2021

CAMPAIGN FOR A BETTER LIFE FOR RABBITS & RODENTS

One Voice for Animals UK (OVFA UK), launched in April 2020 to support the UK's small rescue centres which are struggling due to the Covid crisis, is campaigning during the first half of 2021 to improve the welfare of domestic rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters and other rodents.

As these pets aren't foremost in the minds of the public, there is far less awareness of the welfare issues they face.

The two key welfare issues for this type of pet are :

- Lack of awareness around proper care; diet, health, accommodation, companionship and enrichment needs; and
- Unlicensed breeders selling through the internet. They are not subject to any regulations, legislation or welfare checks, and they provide no care advice to their customers.

Val Green, founder of OVFA UK, said:

"We have over 70 Animal welfare organisations that rescue rabbits and rodents on our public directory, one of them is in Glasgow. Many are deeply concerned about these small mammals' welfare. Animals bred in awful conditions, left cold and lonely in tiny cages with no space to roam, and even abandoned. They have the same needs as our cats and dogs, but because they don't make as much noise, they literally suffer in silence. Please visit our campaign page to see how you can help

www.helpanimals.co.uk/campaigns "

Rabbits are the third most popular pet in the UK but are the most neglected. As well as being left in too-small hutches without room to stretch or mental and physical stimulation, thousands of rabbits end up in rescue centres every month.

OVFA UK member, Beloved Rabbits in Glasgow, has recently come to the aid of rabbits, Edith, Robert and Bruce.

When Edith arrived, she was very overweight having been on a diet predominately of a museli- based feed which is recognised as being a major contributor to dental disease, gut and digestive issues. She also had ear mites and a urinary tract infection. However after two months in the care of Beloved Rabbits, she has lost some weight and her other health issues have been successfully treated. They hope she can be adopted when back to full health.

Robert and Bruce, arrived as a pair from a family who had to rehome them due to a change in circumstances. Unfortunately Roberts had cataracts in both eyes, and the transition from their existing environment into new surroundings resulted in some dominant behaviours between the boys as they attempted to re-asertain their partnership. Ultimately they needed to be separated but both are now doing well and Beloved Rabbits will be seeking new homes for them where they can be buddied with new rabbits for company.

Beloved Rabbits is a charity who being totally self funded, relies on donations from kind hearted members of the public. They offer rabbit rescue, rehoming, bonding and care advice services and say 'Anything bunny related, we're here for you'. The Rescue can be contacted through <https://belovedrabbits.org>

In 2019 Beloved Rabbits received requests to rescue/rehome 754 rabbits, but due to capacity issues, could only accept 242.

In 2020, a further 516 requests were received, but only 215 rabbits could be accommodated.

David Bell, Charity Director and Trustee of Beloved Rabbits has told OVFA UK that a Covid affected

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2020, saw an increase in strays, owner health issues, financial struggles and moving home as primary reasons for surrender.

If anyone is considering a rabbit or rodent for a pet, OVFA UK urges the public to :

1. Find a reputable source to understand your potential pet's needs, such as an animal charity.

For rabbits we recommend the free download of an easy-to-read guide by the Rabbit

Welfare Association & Fund (RWAF) (at

<https://rabbitwelfare.co.uk/rabbit-welfare-association-fund/our-work/rabbit-care-booklet/>)

2. Adopt, don't shop.

You can use the OVFA UK directory at www.helpanimals.co.uk to find a rescue near you (they all vaccinate and neuter rabbits before re-homing)

Company Contact:

[One Voice for Animals UK](#)

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W. <https://helpanimals.co.uk>

Additional Contact(s):

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