

Worcestershire Rescues Join “A Better Life For Rabbits & Rodents” Campaign

Thursday 25 February, 2021

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 top of mind amongst 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, hutches, 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:

"Over 70 rescues in our directory take in rabbits and rodents, with three in Worcestershire. They are deeply concerned about these small mammals' welfare."

Easter is coming up which is a popular time for gifting rabbits, which are the third most popular pet in the UK but are the most neglected with thousands ending up in rescue centres every month.

Greatfield Small Animal Rescue in Kidderminster recently came to the rescue of one such unwanted rabbit. He'd been bought to entertain the children over the summer holidays but the children were too scared to handle him so he was being given away for free. Lynsey saw the social media post and drove 40 miles to take him into her care.

Founder, Lynsey Hill, said:

"Opening the hutch he headed straight to me. I figured this was it; I was about to get savaged by an untamed rabbit. But he head bumped me and waited for a rub, and he's been extremely affectionate and loving ever since. Rabbits are wonderful pets, but they are as big a commitment as cats and dogs. They need your time, your money, and your devotion for their whole life - which can be over ten years."

Rabbits need to live with another rabbit for company, but this one had been kept on his own. They also need room to stretch, mental and physical stimulation, and the right diet. This rabbit was in a very small hutch with no bedding on the floor, and without any handling, didn't even have the opportunity to get out to run and play. There was a bowl of rice and bread on top of the hutch, which is presumably what he was being fed.

Happily, the rabbit is now vaccinated, castrated, and microchipped and living in his forever home as a devoted hus-bun to Elsa.

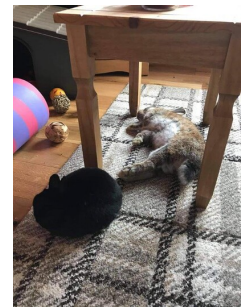
Lynsey has also taken in plenty of mice since she launched her rescue at the start of 2020. On one occasion she was asked to take in 54 from one home. Whilst well-loved, they were badly housed, with 39 crowded into one tank, and of mixed sex. Due to the conditions, only one pregnancy made it to full term.

Lynsey said "Sadly, rodent care is very overlooked. Hopefully adding our voice to OVFA UK's campaign will help people know where to find healthy animals and find out about their needs."

One Voice for Animals UK is urging the public to visit our Campaigns page www.helpanimals.co.uk/campaigns for:

1. Simple things you can do to help - petitions to sign, template letters to send to pet shops and MPs, and reporting irresponsible online ads.
2. Top tips to consider before getting a rabbit.

Media:



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