

Welcome to Tierheim Berlin!

Thank you very much for your interest in Tierheim Berlin and its administrative institution, the Berlin Animal Welfare Association / Tierschutzverein für Berlin (TVB). The TVB was founded in 1841 and opened Germany's first animal shelter in Berlin-Lankwitz in 1901. Exactly 100 years later, in 2001, Tierheim Berlin moved to its current location in Falkenberg. Covering an area of 16 hectares or 22 soccer fields, Tierheim Berlin is the largest animal shelter in all of Europe. On average, we take care of about 1.300 animals every single day – not just cats and dogs, but also small mammals like rabbits, guinea pigs, mice, hamsters and chinchillas as well as countless birds, farm animals like pigs, chickens and geese and even exotic animals like reptiles and some monkeys.

With this info sheet, we are hoping to answer the most important frequently asked questions in English in one handy document.

- **How does the adoption procedure at Tierheim Berlin work?**

First of all, we appreciate your decision to adopt a rescue animal and hope that we have just the right furry, feathery or scaly friend for you!

Below you will find the basic information about our adoption procedures in English. **However, please be aware that it is absolutely vital to enlist a German Native speaker** to help translate and guide you through the various forms that need to be read and filled in (in German) in order to start the adoption process of a shelter animal. Our website is in German and most members of our staff do not speak English very well, so in order to avoid any miscommunication, please be considerate of that fact and have a German friend help you out.

General information about the animal adoption process and several continuative links can be found here: www.tierschutz-berlin.de/tierheim/vermittlung

Many of our animals have their own page with photos and description on our website www.tierschutz-berlin.de/tiere. Please make sure that you browse the site thoroughly – maybe you will already find an animal that catches your interest. If so, please fill in the online form provided on the animal's page. The more thoroughly you fill in the form, the better.

If you don't hear back from the shelter within a few days of your request, please call the phone number provided on the animal's page any day between 1 pm and 3 pm together with your German-speaking friend. You may need some patience here as we receive lots of phone calls and emails every single day and sometimes it's hard to keep up. When you get through, speak (or have your friend speak on behalf of you)

with the caretaker and tell him or her about yourself and what you're looking for in a dog or cat or rabbit...you get the idea.

The caretaker will make a personal appointment with you so you can visit the shelter and meet the animal(s) that might be suitable for you – to see if you like each other in real life as well, not just from online or from a description on the phone. ;-)

Please be aware that it might be possible that the animal you like and initially applied for may not be suitable for you according to the information you provided. However, it can be very helpful to be open to advice from the animal caretakers. They know their animals best, and their job is not only to take care of the animals, but also to be “matchmakers” between humans and pets. If you talk to them openly about your life circumstances and what kind of characteristics your pet should have, oftentimes they know just who might fit you like a glove – even if it's maybe not the animal you fell in love with online. Of course it's your decision if you want him or not, but if you are willing to work with us, we are willing to work with you in order to find just the right pet for you.

Good to know:

Our shelter population changes daily. Even if today we might not have a suitable animal for you, the situation can change within days or weeks. An animal is a companion hopefully for many years to come, and he's a family member. So it is important to find a good match – and that can sometimes take a little time.

Once the decision for a particular animal has been made, there will be some German paperwork to fill in at the information desk in the entrance hall. Also, you have to pay the adoption fee for your new pet. The amount of the adoption fee depends on your animal's kind, age and health. It helps to cover a small percentage of our running expenses and does in no way reflect the actual cost for keeping and tending to the animal in question – that amount is almost always much higher than the adoption fee.

Your new animal will come with a complete health check, all vaccinations, a microchip (or a ring if it's a bird) and a registration with the pet registry “Findefix” in your name. If your animal is a cat due to be spayed or neutered at a later time, the cost of that surgery is already included in the adoption fee, and you can bring the cat to our vet practice when it's time for the surgery.

If your pet is a dog, he will initially go home with you for a one-week trial period, during which you can return him to the shelter anytime if you feel like he's not the right fit for you after all. If everything goes well, the adoption will be finalized after the trial week.

By the way: If you adopt an animal that suffers from a preexisting medical condition, treatment and medication for that medical condition are provided for free at our veterinary practice for as long as your animal lives. Of course you may choose your own vet, but please be aware that Tierheim Berlin will only offer free treatment for preexisting conditions at our own practice – we will not cover the expenses for other vet's treatments of said preexisting conditions.

This is just a basic rundown of our adoption procedures. Some exceptions to the rules may apply in the individual case, e.g. sometimes it may be required that you visit your new future dog several times at the shelter to get to know him a little better before he can move in with you for his trial period.

Good to know:

You're very welcome to stay in touch with us. We'd like to hear how your new pet settles in at your home and if you have questions or problems with your animal, we are here to help with answers and advice. Should you – for whatever reason – cannot keep your animal from Tierheim Berlin any longer, we will take him back and find a new forever home for him.

- **Can I volunteer at Tierheim Berlin?**

Theoretically, of course – however, **you have to have a good working knowledge of the German language!** The majority of our staff doesn't speak English at all or not well enough to explain things to English speakers. Also, in order to become a volunteer, you have to undergo introductory training session(s) that are taught in German.

On our homepage, you can find all information about volunteering and a contact for our volunteer office: www.tierschutz-berlin.de/spenden-und-helfen/ehrenamtlich-unterstuetzen

Please note:

Due to the current situation we have paused the volunteer introductory training and therefore weren't able to integrate new volunteers into our team since Mid-March. However, we are hoping to relaunch the training sessions soon. If you're interested, please ask about them at the volunteer office, phone 030 76888-122 or by email to ehrenamt@tierschutz-berlin.de. **Please be aware that the number of volunteer applications is quite high, so it might take a while for you to receive an invitation to an introductory training.**

- **Can I foster animals from Tierheim Berlin?**

Under certain circumstances, you could sign up for fostering kittens, puppies, small mammals, baby birds or older/sick cats or dogs who are looking for a hospice place to spend their remaining time at. A very important factor is time. If you are in Berlin only for a few months, fostering for Tierheim Berlin unfortunately is out of the question. You have to plan on staying in the city for at least a year, because one never knows how long an animal might actually be in need of foster care. We try to avoid for our animals having to move to new foster parents because their current ones are running out of time. A move is always highly stressful for an animal, much more so if he loses his beloved human caretakers as well and has to get used to new people.

Also, fostering kittens, baby birds and (even more so) puppies is a lot of work, comparable with taking care of a human toddler – a rather time-consuming matter! And with any foster animal you will be required to come to the vet practice at the shelter regularly – for vaccinations, spaying/neutering or possibly other medical treatment, especially if you offer a hospice place for an older dog or cat. Therefore, a car might be required for transporting your foster animal(s) to our vet practice from time to time.

Please note:

All of our foster animals are special needs animals. They're either too young, too old or too sick to be able to comfortably live at the shelter – they all have in common that they need a lot more care and tending to than the average adult pet. They move into foster homes because at the shelter, we cannot give them the amount of care that they require. Fostering rescue animals from shelters is a 24/7 animal welfare task.

If all that doesn't put you off and you can imagine adjusting your personal life to the needs of your foster animal(s), **please get a German Native speaker to help you with the communication with the shelter.** Have that person read the section titled “**Pflegestellen**” on this part of our homepage: www.tierschutz-berlin.de/spenden-und-helfen/ehrenamtlich-unterstuetzen/ and follow the instructions provided on that page.

Thank you for your time and for reading this info paper!

Your Team Tierheim Berlin