



Home Checking Guide

Thank you for signing up to carry out home checks for Dogs Friends Rescue.

This role is absolutely essential to our fostering and adoptions scheme and so we are extremely grateful for any time you have to give.

Please only sign up for what you feel able to do - there is no minimum commitment or pressure.

The process

Step 1: A call out will be posted in the WhatsApp group stating the location and time scales of the home check required. If you can do it, please reply in the group chat.

Step 2: A volunteer will send you the applicant's details and you get in contact directly with the applicant (who will be expecting to hear from you) to arrange a suitable time.

Step 3: You attend the home check and complete the [home check form](#). If you have anything at all you are concerned about please tell us - it is exceptionally important to ensure the dogs go to safe homes.

You are not required to take photos at the home check but we recommend you take photos if there are areas that you are unsure of, are unconventional, or it's a hard to describe area.

Always make sure we know when you are attending a home check and keep us informed - this is for your safety.

Step 4: The adoption volunteers may be in touch if any clarification is needed, and then will communicate the result of the home check with the applicants.

Health and safety:

- Please ensure that one of the Dogs Friends team is aware of where and when you are conducting your home check.
- If you feel uncomfortable at any point during the home check, it's best to make an excuse and leave - do not stay if you are worried.
- Do not attend a home check if you are unwell - even if it's just a cold or a headache, as we don't want to spread any germs around.
- If you would like to be accompanied on a home check by a member of your family or another home checker, please let us know. Your safety is our top priority. We must also ensure the applicant is informed of who is attending their home check for their safety.

What to look out for at a home check

1. Inside the home

We don't expect homes to be immaculate but they should be tidy with space for a dog to move around, free from hazards and hygienic/clean.

You should look in all rooms of the house to ensure nothing is being hidden (applicants are aware of this beforehand), even if these are areas the dog won't be allowed.

Look out for:

- Packaged or loose food and drink left at dog height - this should be stored away in the kitchen, especially as many rescue dogs may be scavengers.
- Hazards such as unsteady stacks of items, loose wires, small children's toys etc.
- Cleaning products and chemicals (often stored by a bathroom sink), medicines etc should be closed away safely in a cupboard
- If a home has small children, then toys with small pieces like lego must be tidied away - whilst easy to miss, things like this can pose a real choking hazard to dogs.
- Toxic plants and flowers should be removed - a bunch of Lilies is a prime example of a very toxic hazard to both dogs and cats. [Batterseas Toxic Plants Guide](#)

If a dog has specific home needs, such as being an escape artist, a jumper, or able to counter surf, you will be informed of these requirements ahead of the home check.



2. The garden

The front garden is not required to be secure, providing that applicants take extreme care when opening the front door - a scared rescue dog will try and bolt. It's best to use an 'airlock' system and always have a closed internal door between the dog and an open front door.

The back garden should be free of hazards (see examples below) and have a secure, strong and sturdy boundary.

Examples of hazards in the garden include:

- Open ponds with no netting or mesh - this is a drowning risk
- Rubbish or litter - a wrapper blown in the wind is not an issue of course, but a garden with lots of rubbish can provide some very unsafe snacks for a confused dog!
- Furniture or bins up against the boundary which can provide a climbing route out over the boundary
- Gardening supplies such as weed killer etc must be securely stored away - many of these items can be lethal to dogs.
- Gaps down the side of sheds etc where a dog could run in when frightened and get stuck (this is common with frightened puppy farm dogs). These gaps should be covered with netting or mesh etc.

Fencing

We do not have a blanket rule of fencing, however there will be times where we do specify a fencing height for specific dogs - for example, a young Greyhound will always need 6ft+ whereas an elderly Bichon would usually be safe in a garden with 4ft fencing. This will be communicated with applicants before the home check stage. Please ensure you check behind shrubs etc to be sure there are no gaps in fencing that may be hidden.

Fencing should be in good condition, any breaks in the fencing will offer the perfect escape route for a dog and is not safe.



Points to note

If in doubt - speak out! If you see something or hear something that you feel is a little worrying, even if it seems insignificant, please tell us.

Home checkers will not be responsible for communicating the outcome of the home check to applicants - if an applicant asks you if they have passed, please tell them that you just take notes and the rescue makes the decision.

If there are issues raised this does not necessarily mean a 'failed' home check but does mean that we will make recommendations before approving a fostering or adoption placement.