

# Bunnies are not just for Christmas



Many people give pets as gifts to people and usually children at Christmas time. Local animal charities are urging that pets are not bought on a whim and given with very little thought as presents this year.

Emma Boyd, Co-Founder of Buddies Bunny Rescue, a rabbit rescue in Midlothian advises the following;

Rabbits in particular are very specialised pets, they may look cute and fluffy when young, which can be very hard to resist, however all babies grow up and become adults who will need your love, care and attention for possibly the next 10 years or more. This needs to be very carefully considered and discussed with the whole family before any impulse purchases are made.

Rabbits need to live in bonded pairs – it is cruel to leave a rabbit alone outside all year, they are prey animals so need the constant companionship of another rabbit friend for them to feel happy and secure.

Rabbits must be vaccinated once every year, like cats and dogs, for incurable diseases and they must be neutered. Even if kept in same sex pairs neutering must be done to prevent behavioural issues and reproductive cancers which are very common in entire males and females – around 80% of female un-neutered rabbits over the age of 5 will have uterine cancer.



Floella & Mabel, 2 young girls ready for their new home.

It is also very outdated to keep rabbits hutch bound, in the

wild rabbits would cover many miles of ground each day and are able to dig, lie out flat, hop and stand on their hind legs and fully stretch – none of these can be done in a small hutch. The minimum recommendation for hutch size is 6ftx2ftx2ft with a permanent exercise run of at least 8ftx4ft attached, rabbits are more active at dawn and dusk so they must have 24/7 access to this run so they can choose when to have play time and not wait for their owner to put them out at usually a time of day when they would be tucked up in their bed sleeping.

A common misconception is that rabbits are good children's pets – they are not, being a prey animal they fear being picked up and sometimes handled – children must interact with them on floor level and be content with patting and stroking rather than lifting and carrying their bunny around.

So it is imperative to research any animal fully before buying it for a Christmas present and if everyone has decided after doing that that is the pet for them, consider getting them after Christmas – when times are less stressful and busy with friends and families and parties – animals needs calm environments in which to settle in and feel secure to be happy.

Lastly adopt don't buy animals, there are 67 thousand rabbits alone in rescue centres throughout the UK waiting patiently on their forever homes, they deserve to be given this – many of them will have been last year's Christmas presents – already given up as the novelty has worn off.'

The rabbits photographed are all available for adoption from Bunnies Rescue.

*Contact the charity for further information!*

*Buddies Bunny Rescue*

*Scottish Registered Charity: SC043193*

[www.buddiesbunnies.co.uk](http://www.buddiesbunnies.co.uk)

*A voluntary run rabbit rescue based in Midlothian. We help Edinburgh & beyond's, stray, neglected, abandoned and unwanted rabbits & aim to educate the public of their plight.*



This rabbit is called Apple she is 2 and is looking for a husbun to pair up with if anyone is looking.