

SPCA Foster Coordinator



Each year, SPCA helps thousands of animals from backgrounds of injury, illness, abuse, neglect, and abandonment. Many of the animals that come into SPCA need additional care, treatment, and/or socialization before finding their forever home. Foster Coordinators find foster homes and volunteers that can provide temporary care for animals recovering from surgery, needing daily medicine, or that need training and socialization.

Foster Coordinators spend their days working with both people and animals. They arrange the pick-up and drop off of animals, schedule vet appointments, and organize everything foster volunteers need. They also provide training, support, and advice to the volunteers.

Staff Interview:

We interviewed Lauren Furness about her experience as an SPCA Foster Coordinator and here's what she had to say:

1 Why did you want to become an SPCA Foster Coordinator?

I have always loved the work of SPCA and wanted to work for an animal charity, but the more hands-on animal care roles didn't seem quite the right fit. When I found out about the more 'behind the scenes' opportunities of helping run things like the volunteer and foster programmes, it matched my skills and passions perfectly.



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2 What are the main responsibilities or tasks as an SPCA Foster Coordinator?

My main responsibilities are recruiting and retaining foster families, matching up animals with suitable foster families, coordinating animals being collected/ returned to our SPCA centre, and supporting foster families whilst they have animals in their care. I also create resources such as information handouts, manuals and newsletters, run training presentations on topics such as feline socialisation and neonate care, organise volunteer celebration events, assist the vet team at foster appointments, and generally make sure the foster programme runs smoothly. It's a very diverse role!



3 What do you enjoy most about being an SPCA Foster Coordinator?

I love seeing animals through their SPCA journey - from arriving at the centre unwell or injured, to heading out to foster and finally returning happy and healthy, ready for adoption. Fostering really is a win-win situation for the foster families and the animals. It's great to be part of such a positive part of the SPCA's work - seeing how far the animals come during their time out of the centre, and how much joy foster families receive in return. I especially love the 'spicy' kitten stories; semi-feral animals who head out to foster to learn to trust humans. I also enjoy that I get to work closely with many teams across the organisation which can include keeping the inspectors updated on proactive custody animals out at foster, helping the vet team at appointments and chatting through plans with the animal care team.



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4 What did you have to do to become an SPCA Foster Coordinator?

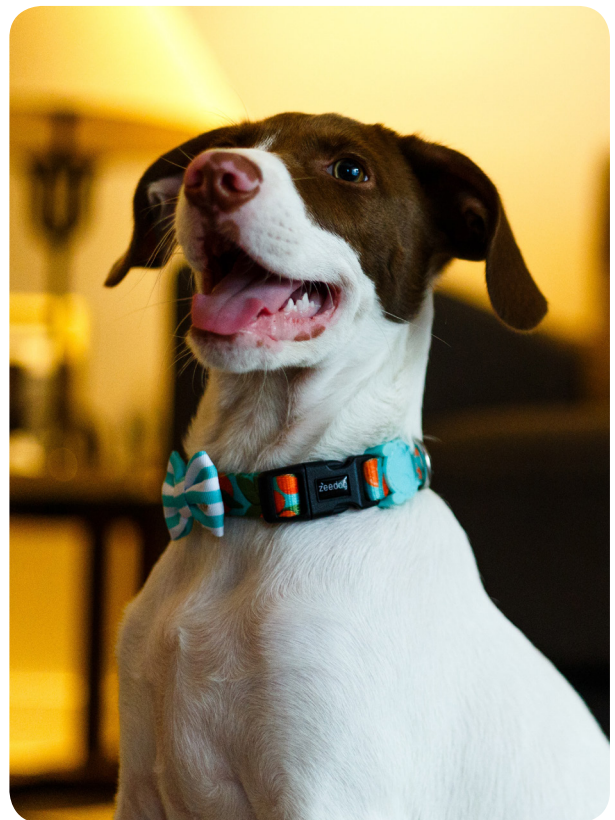
I originally did a university degree in BSc Zoology over in the UK, along with lots of volunteer work with various animal organisations such as a boarding kennels and Orana Wildlife Park. When I moved to New Zealand, I applied for the role of 'Volunteer and Foster Support' at the SPCA, and as both the volunteer and foster programmes grew, there became the need for the departments to become independent from one another. I then took on the full responsibilities of the foster programme.

5 What skills do you think you need to be an SPCA Foster Coordinator?

You need to be good at juggling lots of things at once! Sometimes there are over 200 animals in foster care at one time, at just one SPCA centre, so it's important to be able to multi-task and have great organisational skills to efficiently move animals in and out of the centre, while giving everyone support and keeping things running smoothly. You also need to be empathetic and good with people – we have so many amazing foster families to support, so it is important to be able to help each individual get the most out of the programme and therefore get the best results for the animals.

6 What advice would you give to someone who wants to become an SPCA Foster Coordinator?

Get lots of experience both with animals and with people. While you are helping the animals, remember that this role is human-centred, so it is important that you enjoy working with people too. Signing up as an SPCA foster volunteer with your family would be an awesome first step – that way you'll learn some of the inner workings of the programme and get a real feel of whether it could be the role for you.





How to become an SPCA Foster Coordinator:



Fun SPCA Foster Coordinator Fact:

SPCA Foster Coordinators find temporary care for thousands of animals each year – they're especially busy in summer when SPCA is full of cats and kittens!

Although there are no specific requirements to become a Foster Coordinator, a National Certificate in Animal Care to New Zealand Certificate in Animal Care (Level 3) is a huge advantage.

Additionally, the below qualifications and experience are preferred:

- Skilled in volunteer/foster parent selection, recruitment and management.
- Animal handling experience and/or qualification
- Proven experience in a customer service focused role
- Excellent phone manner, call centre experience or experience dealing with customers/volunteers over the phone.

