

BRIGHT HORIZON HAMSTER RESCUE



1ST ISSUE
NEWSLETTER
WINTER 2024

BREAKING NEWS!

We're proud and humbled to share that we've become a registered charity: Bright Horizon Hamster Rescue (1210796)!

Our application was approved exactly two years - to the day - after someone in our founding group typed the tired words "we've got to set up a rescue, there's just too many who need help". We've always aspired to be a registered charity, and we are so honoured to have achieved this goal.

It was a huge challenge to meet the strict requirements while running a very busy rescue, and our whole team played a part in getting us there. We are so grateful to all of them, and to our supporters who've believed in us and shared our values on the journey.

Bright Horizon is now the first regulated, registered UK charity that exists solely for the benefit of hamsters.

We sincerely hope that we will be joined by many, and that our experiences of the process can help other rescues who would like to reach charitable status. We are very happy to help if we can.

It's a success for hamsters before humans, bringing credibility to their cause and holding the doors open for more ethical rescues to show the general public that our work is real, needed, and recognised by the UK government.

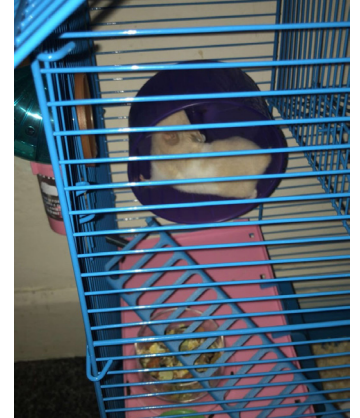
We promise to put this success back into the bigger goals of everyone fighting alongside us for the rights and welfare of hamsters.



THE PROBLEM...

600,000: this is the population of hamsters in the UK kept as pets in 2024*. The overwhelming majority of these are sold by pet shop chains at a low price.

The shops source their stock from rodent mills, where alongside other rodents they are intensively bred for the frozen food market: fatalities are high and genetic defects common.



Lilligant in her cage before rescuing

Much of the equipment sold with the hamster falls below the RSPCA welfare minimum for the species, and further below the welfare minimums recognised by the PDSA and Blue Cross. Many items have been proven to be unsafe due to the materials they are made of, their height or their small size.

Hamsters are habitually mis-sexed and sold as suitable for cohabitation: all species are solitary in adulthood and will fight to the death for territory and resources. Accidental litters are commonplace, further increasing the number of unwanted hamsters.

The "live feeding" subculture is active in acquiring unwanted hamsters: the inadequately regulated practice is dangerous for predator pets and causes unnecessary suffering to both animals. (* <https://www.statista.com/statistics/515403/hamsters-population-in-the-united-kingdom-uk/>)

HOW WE HELP

Most hamsters arrive into rescue care physically or psychologically damaged by poor care, nutrition and neglect. Our arrivals are immediately housed in safe, suitable, solitary enclosures, assessed, vet-checked and monitored for pregnancy.

Hamsters are rehabilitated in home foster environments, given space and time to learn natural behaviours, and expertly handled and socialised with knowledgeable humans who respect their instinctive needs. Unique homes are matched with individual hamsters, with prospective adopters comprehensively assessed prior to adoption.

Every hamster is offered lifelong care: those with ongoing health/behaviour problems remain as loved residents with full care for the rest of their lives, and adopters receive full support from BHHR for life.

HOW WE HELP

SUPPORT & EDUCATION: we assist hamster owners experiencing health and behaviour problems, and those who wish to improve welfare for their hamster, with information and education, and where appropriate material resources to keep wanted hamsters out of the rescue system

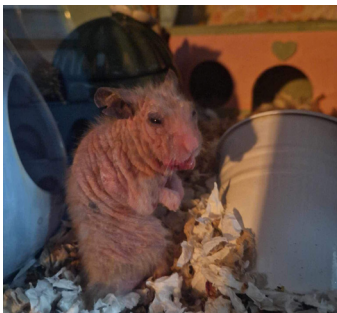
RESEARCH: our membership is rich in qualified scientists from diverse fields. Our Research Team is constantly working to evidence welfare needs, learn more about hamster health, and share this information with the wider public in accessible and attractive ways to counter the misinformation commonly provided at point of sale.



Lilligant in foster care

CASE STUDY: NATSU

NATSU was brought into a kind person's home by their cat, and received by a BHHR member. He was critically dehydrated, malnourished, and suffering from internal and external parasites. Our vets believe he survived outside for some weeks: the UK climate and flora is unsurvivable for hamsters, who originate from arid Eurasian grasslands.



Natsu survived his first 24h and began to recover strength and body mass. His bald skin was covered in lesions, which began to heal but reappeared in new locations. BH fundraised for an operation to remove one such lesion from his lower lip that was affecting his ability to eat and drink unaided.

After extensive tests, Natsu was discovered to have a form of lymphoma that is caused by a polyavirus hamsters contract from exposure to other species.

His remaining weeks were spent in safe, loving care with medications supporting his palliative quality of life. When he passed, he knew and remembered only the love of his foster, his large safe and enriching enclosure and his time spent exploring in secure free-roam.

CASE STUDY: CARDI

CARDI was surrendered to BHHR along with her separated sibling Marshall, after her owner became aware that the three "male" dwarf hamsters she had been sold together by an independent pet shop were fighting and injuring each other.



In transit to us, she entered labour: two pups were born in the transport carrier, discovered on arrival. She and these pups were expertly relocated to her foster enclosure. A further five were born. Miraculously, Cardi did not cull her litter - common if a mother perceives danger - and successfully nursed and raised all seven in high care conditions until sexing and separation at puberty.

Cardi has since been diagnosed with Y suture cataracts, a congenital disability: she is fully blind. Her babies are the product of inbreeding and four of the seven have been diagnosed with life-limiting conditions seen often in the genetics of mass bred hamsters: congenital blindness, and neurological disorders that affect balance and behaviour, requiring adapted enclosures. BHHR will ensure that every one receives lifelong veterinary care and specialist adaptations.

Cardi's original owner was supported with care information and full veterinary history for the third hamster that she did not surrender to us.

A guide to the areas we cover

■ Counties we cover

■ Counties we can travel to

BRIGHT HORIZON
HAMSTER RESCUE

Registered Charity Number 1210796

Brighthorizonhamster.co.uk

SPOTLIGHT: ROBOROVSKIS

ROBOROVSKI HAMSTERS are the smallest species kept in captivity. They are crepuscular, meaning they are most active at dawn and dusk, though some may be awake during the day. Known for their incredible speed, these hamsters can run the equivalent of four human marathons each night on average. Their energetic nature makes them fascinating to watch as they race around their enclosures, interacting with the enrichment provided.

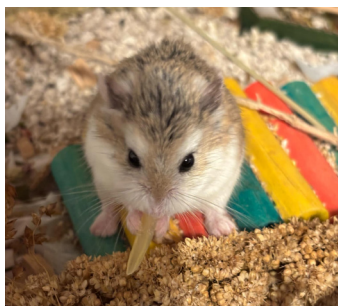
As the most recently domesticated hamster species, they can be shy, but with patience and their favorite treats, some may enjoy being handled or given a treat. Robos are solitary animals and must live alone, even if they are siblings. While they may coexist in the wild, they can move to new territories if disputes arise. In captivity, fights over resources or territory can lead to serious injury or even be fatal.

Despite their small size, Robos require a minimum enclosure size of 100 cm x 50 cm with at least 8 inches of burrowing bedding to be happy. In their natural habitat, they cover large distances each night and burrow as deep as six feet underground. They also need a large sand bath, as they originate from sandy desert regions.

These tiny hamsters are frequently overshadowed by Syrian or Russian Dwarf hamsters, yet they make ideal pets due to their longer lifespan and lower maintenance requirements compared to other species. Why not consider giving a Roborovski hamster a chance?



Isaac Newton, available for adoption



Ice, available for adoption



Pooka



Fern

CHRISTMAS BREAK

WE WISH A MERRY CHRISTMAS to all our wonderful supporters! Please note that we will pause adoptions during the Holiday Season.

LAST DAY FOR ADOPTIONS: DECEMBER 20TH
REOPENING FOR ADOPTIONS: DECEMBER 30TH

During this time we will still be available for surrenders, reservations and to discuss adoptions, though our online presence may be limited as we celebrate the festive season with our families and furry companions.

Have a safe and joyful holiday season and we're looking forward to opening our doors again soon!

If you're thinking of skipping Christmas cards this year, why not spread some holiday cheer by donating to Bright Horizon Hamster Rescue instead? It's a wonderful way to make a difference to your favourite hamster rescue..

You can make your donation via PayPal, bank transfer or with our Amazon wish list. Visit brighthorizonhamster.co.uk/donate

It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving.

BRIGHT HORIZON HAMSTER RESCUE

Instagram and Facebook icons are present in the bottom right corner.

FOLLOW US FOR MORE!

PLEASE FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA to hear all of our news and view our available hamsters. You can find us here:

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WEBSITE: www.brighthorizonhamster.co.uk/