

## FELINE

# Rearing foster kittens...

### *Tracy's story - Rearing foster kittens - a passion*

As a veterinary nurse, something I always wanted to do was hand rear a litter of kittens. It wasn't until my circumstances changed that I got the opportunity to do just that. Until I had reared my first litter I had no idea how much of a passion it was to become and how much I would gain from it.



I have up to now reared over 40 kittens for Cats Protection and it is a real joy and incredibly rewarding. It is something I want to keep doing as long as orphan kittens need rearing!

Kittens have come to me aged anywhere between 2 days and 3 weeks old and because of many different circumstances. Some have been abandoned, some have been orphaned and sometimes their Mum just refuses to mother them. Whatever the reason they come to me, they need and rely on me to step up and become their Mum.



They need to learn to use a litter tray, eat solids and socialise, all very important lessons in becoming well rounded homeable cats.

It has been a steep learning curve, a real rollercoaster. It's hard work and at times incredibly tiring and messy BUT I have loved every minute of it, even the 2 hourly night feeds (honest).

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No two litters have been the same and each kitten has been a real individual. I had one baby with a wound on her leg which meant at just 4 days old she needed her leg amputated. Pipsqueak was a real fighter and against all the odds and reoccurring infection she pulled through and turned into a very happy and contented kitten, who went to a home where to this day she is being treated like the princess she is. Others have whistled through kitten hood with

no issues and others seem to be at the vets every five minutes for all manner of issues from upset tummies to eye infections and everything in between. Of course along the way there have been some who have lost the fight, what ever the reason, losing a kitten is always devastating and causes tears to be shed but the survivors keep me going, they still need me to help them fight that fight to survive.

I have seen all these adorable little scraps grow from tiny helpless babies into lively, rambunctious kittens moving onto their new lives in new homes. Needless to say my own family has grown by four, not bad considering the amount of needy babies that have passed through my hands!!



Fostering these babies has helped me through a rough time in my life and been so very rewarding. Kitten season is set to begin shortly and I am bracing myself for any babies that need my help, sadly there are always some who need my help.

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