



Animal Activities Licensing Guidance & Frequently Asked Questions

[The Animal Welfare \(Licensing of Activities Involving Animals\) \(England\) Regulations 2018](#) replaced several other pieces of animal legislation and brought in a star rating system to assess licensees.

What activities require a licence under the regulations?

A licence is required when any of the licensable activities outlined in [Schedule 1](#) of the regulations are undertaken. These are:

- Selling animals as pets (Part 2)
- Providing or arranging for the provision of boarding for cats or dogs (Part 3)
- Hiring out horses (Part 4)
- Breeding dogs (Part 5)
- Keeping or training animals for exhibition (Part 6)

Who can apply for a licence?

Any individual who can comply with the nationally set standards and licence conditions, will be issued an Animal Activities Licence. However, [Section 11](#) of the regulations provides details of persons who may not apply for a licence.

How do I apply for a licence?

You can request a licence application via our website at:

<https://www.lincoln.gov.uk/licences/request-licence-application-form>

Once you receive your application, it must be submitted in writing, along with any supporting documentation, and the appropriate fee.

We will notify licence holders when their existing licence expires, at least 3 months prior to expiry. Licence holders must make a new application at least 10 weeks before the licence expires. This allows time for the application to be reviewed and to ensure activities can be continued without a break.

How much does a licence cost?

The City of Lincoln Council's fees have been set and are available to view on our website. All fees will be calculated considering the statutory guidance stipulated in [Regulation 13](#).

[View the current fees for 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2025](#)

What standards/conditions will I be expected to meet to obtain a licence?

Minimum Standards

You will need to meet the requirements of all the minimum standards, although minor failings may be noted/recorded providing they do not compromise the welfare of the animals (these should be predominantly administrative in nature).

The minimum standards are outlined in DEFRA's licensable animal activity guides:

- [Day care for dogs](#)
- [Dog breeding](#)
- [Selling animals as pets](#)
- [Providing home boarding for dogs](#)
- [Providing boarding in kennels for dogs](#)
- [Providing boarding for cats](#)
- [Hiring out horses](#)

Higher Standards

For each activity (except keeping or training animals for exhibition), a number of higher standards have been agreed. Meeting the higher standards is optional but is the only way to gain a 4 or 5-star rating. If an individual would like to qualify at the higher standards, the business must meet:

- All of the required higher standards
- At least 50% of the optional higher standards

Conditions

The Regulations apply general and activity-specific conditions that businesses must meet in order to obtain an Animal Activity Licence. The specific licence conditions can be found in Schedules 3 – 7.

The general conditions (found in [Schedule 2](#)) are based on the five welfare needs set out in the Animal Welfare Act 2006. These are:

- the need for a suitable environment
- the need for a suitable diet
- the need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
- any need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals
- the need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease

How is the risk rating assessed?

Existing licence holders will be risk rated against a standard 14-point criteria checklist which considers a number of factors relating to compliance history, complaints, welfare standards and management standards. This scoring system will determine if the risk is high or low..

All new businesses which do not have compliance history with a Local Authority or UKAS accredited scheme will be assessed as higher risk. – The Kennel Club's UKAS accreditation expired on 30 May 2024, which means that members of its Assured Breeders scheme are no longer certified.

How is my star rating and length of licence calculated?

To decide on star rating and licence length, we adopt a risk-based approach. We consider the:

- compliance history of the individual applying for the licence - whether they are low risk or high risk
- animal welfare standards the individual follows - whether they have minor failings, follow minimum standards or already operate at a higher standard

Licences can be issued for a period of either one, two or three years depending on the risk rating and level of compliance. This also corresponds with the star rating for the establishment. Below is the animals activity star rating system.

Star Rating System		Welfare Standards		
		Minor Failings	Minimum Standards	Higher Standards
Risk	Low Risk	1 Star 1 year licence Minimum 1 unannounced visit within 12-month period	3 Stars 2 year licence Minimum 1 unannounced visit within 24-month period	5 Stars 3 year licence Minimum 1 unannounced visit within 36-month period
	Higher Risk	1 Star 1 year licence Minimum 1 unannounced visit within 12-month period	2 Stars 1 year licence Minimum 1 unannounced visit within 12-month period	4 Stars 2 year licence Minimum 1 unannounced visit within 24-month period

Licences for the keeping or training animals for exhibition are issued for three years and do not have a start rating

How is the licence application assessed?

All licence applications will be assessed based on:

- an assessment of the operator (applicant) detailing:
 - whether they are a fit and proper person to carry out the licensable activity
 - their knowledge
 - their experience
 - their compliance history
 - their ability to meet their licence conditions
 - whether they are currently disqualified from making an application
- an inspection of the site of the licensable activity by a suitably qualified inspector (accompanied by a registered veterinarian, or other authorised person/organisation)
- the report submitted by the inspector

What information is provided with the licence?

When a licence is issued, we will provide the following information:

- the star rating
- details of how the business has been rated including a list of the higher standards the business currently fails to meet or a list of the minimum standards the business is failing to meet and resulting in a minor failing category
- a copy of the risk management table showing the scores under each point
- details of the appeals process and the deadline by which an appeal must be made

What if my application is refused?

The City of Lincoln Council will consider the report from the inspector and any comments made by the applicant when deciding whether to issue a licence.

If the licence is refused, we will write to the applicant explaining why the application was refused. This is called a notice of refusal. The applicant has 28 days from the date they receive the notice to appeal to the [first-tier tribunal](#).

We **must** refuse to grant a licence if we:

- think the applicant is not capable of meeting their licence conditions
- think that granting a licence might negatively affect the welfare, health or safety of the animals involved in the activity

We **can** refuse to grant a licence if:

- the housing, staffing or management are inadequate for the animals' wellbeing or for the activity or facility to be run properly
- the applicant has been disqualified from holding a licence previously

What can I do if I am unhappy/disagree with the star rating awarded to me?

To ensure fairness to the business, we have an appeals procedure in place for you to dispute the star rating given.

Any appeal against the star rating assigned to the business will be dealt with by the Public Protection, Anti-social Behaviour and Licensing Service Manager or the Assistant Director for Communities and Environment.

Where a request is received from a licence holder for their star rating to be reviewed this will incur an additional charge. This will include any request to add animals to an inventory for a pet shop, or to add further dogs to a dog breeding licence, etc.

[View the current fees for 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2025](#)

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please email us at: ppasb@lincoln.gov.uk