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Statutory guidance

Selling animals as pets licensing: statutory guidance for local authorities

Updated 1 February 2022

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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-activities-licensing-guidance-for-local-authorities/selling-animals-as-pets-licensing-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities--2>

This guidance is for local authority inspectors in England. You should read it alongside the [Animal Welfare \(Licensing of Activities Involving Animals\) \(England\) Regulations 2018](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukksi/2018/486/schedule/4/made). (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukksi/2018/486/schedule/4/made>)

To decide if an activity is covered by the regulations and needs a licence to operate, you should consider all of the following guidance.

All selling animals as pets activities need a licence if they're carried out as a commercial business.

To decide if an activity is a business and will need a licence, consider if the operator:

- makes any sale or carries out the activity to make a profit
- earns any commission or fee from the activity

A commercial business will need a licence to:

- sell animals as pets (or to be later resold as pets)
- keep animals to be sold or resold

This does not include businesses that:

- sell animals in the course of aquacultural production
- breed dogs

You should also consider [HMRC's 9 badges of trade](https://www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/business-income-manual/bim20205). (<https://www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/business-income-manual/bim20205>)

If someone has a trading income below the [HMRC trading income allowance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tax-free-allowances-on-property-and-trading-income#trade) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tax-free-allowances-on-property-and-trading-income#trade>), they do not require a licence for their activities.

If someone has a trading income above the HMRC trading income allowance, they do not automatically qualify as a business.

An operator is likely to be selling animals as pets as a commercial business and will need a licence if they:

- import, distribute and sell animals for a fixed fee
- buy animals with the express intent to sell them on
- buy animals and then re-advertise for sale or sell within a short period of time
- have systematic and repeated transactions using the same means of advertising
- sell or advertise high volumes of animals or high number of litters or progeny
- sell or advertise low volumes of animals - this could indicate high sales prices or large profit margins
- trade a wide range of animals
- advertise many animals for sale at any one time or over a short period of time, or regularly, including on classified websites, even where there is no actual sale taking place on the internet
- advertise through a variety of sites, forums or media

Activities that fulfil one or more of the following criteria do not require a licence:

- selling a small number of surplus offspring or excess stock from animals bred as a hobby, for pleasure, exhibition for prize, or for education, study or scientific advancement and for low value species that may produce large numbers of excess stock, consider the value of the stock and the likelihood that the seller is making a profit
- organised events where people meet to sell surplus animals they have bred, or animals that are surplus to their requirements, whether or not this is open to the public - sellers must not sell pet animals as a business from a market or stall
- aquacultural production authorised under regulation 5(1) of the Aquatic Animal Health (England and Wales) Regulations 2009, and that is inspected by the Fish Health Inspectorate
- non-commercial rehoming of animals

An operator is not likely to be selling animals as pets as a commercial business and will not need a licence if they can demonstrate:

- their transactions are irregular, with low numbers, frequency or volume of sales or adverts
- they sell animals as a hobby, for education or scientific advancement, and that they sell only surplus stock, not for profit - evidence could include reports or studies about the species published in scientific journals, pet trade or hobby media or self-published, contributions to conservation projects, competition entry forms, or membership of a relevant club or society
- that rehoming is not for profit, and does not meet the business tests

Minimum standards

It is expected that all businesses will meet and maintain minimum standards. If on a renewal inspection you identify minor failings that do not compromise welfare standards, follow the [risk-based approach to renewing a licence](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-activities-licensing-guidance-for-local-authorities/animal-activity-licensing-process-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities#granting-or-renewing-a-licence-risk-based-approach) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-activities-licensing-guidance-for-local-authorities/animal-activity-licensing-process-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities#granting-or-renewing-a-licence-risk-based-approach>).

To grant a new animal activities licence to sell animals as pets, you must check that businesses meet all of the minimum standards in this guidance.

Higher standards

Businesses that meet the higher standard will get a 4 or 5 star rating in the [animals activity star rating system](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-activities-licensing-guidance-for-local-authorities/animal-activity-licensing-process-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities#granting-or-renewing-a-licence-risk-based-approach) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-activities-licensing-guidance-for-local-authorities/animal-activity-licensing-process-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities#granting-or-renewing-a-licence-risk-based-approach>).

Higher standards are required or optional. To achieve the higher rating, a business selling animals needs to achieve all of the required higher standards and at least 50% of the optional higher standards.

If a business meets the higher standards, they qualify for a longer licence that's valid for 2 or 3 years rather than for one year. They'll also pay a lower licence fee.

See [Animal activity licensing process: statutory guidance for local authorities](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-activities-licensing-guidance-for-local-authorities/animal-activity-licensing-process-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities#granting-or-renewing-a-licence-risk-based-approach) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-activities-licensing-guidance-for-local-authorities/animal-activity-licensing-process-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities#granting-or-renewing-a-licence-risk-based-approach>) for an explanation of the animal activity star rating system and how it incorporates a risk assessment of the business.

General conditions and species-specific guidance

Parts A and B of this guide cover general conditions that apply to all species.

Parts C to L cover species-specific guidance.

You should refer to Defra codes of practice on:

- [cat welfare](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-for-the-welfare-of-cats) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-for-the-welfare-of-cats>)
- [dog welfare](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-for-the-welfare-of-dogs) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-for-the-welfare-of-dogs>)

Part A – General conditions (Schedule 2 of the regulations)

1.0 Licence display

1.1 A copy of the licence must be clearly and prominently displayed on any premises used for the licensable activity.

The licensed premises' address must be displayed on the licence.

1.2 The name of the licence holder followed by the number of the licence holder's licence must be clearly and prominently displayed on any website used in respect of the licensable activity.

The name on the licence must be the individual licence holder's name.

A duplicate licence can be issued for public display in the name of the business.

2.0 Records

2.1 The licence holder must ensure that at any time all the records that the licence holder is required to keep as a condition of the licence are available for inspection by an inspector in a visible and legible form or, where any such records are stored in electronic form, in a form from which they can readily be produced in a visible and legible form.

2.2 The licence holder must keep all such records for at least 3 years beginning with the date on which the record was created.

Electronic records must be backed up.

3.0 Use, number and type of animal

3.1 No animals or types of animal other than those animals and types of animal specified in the licence may be used in relation to the relevant licensable activity.

Only animals specified in the licence can be stocked for selling.

For reptiles, amphibians, fish, and rodents, the named animals on the licence can be grouped by species (for example, tropical fish, snakes, newts, hamsters, gerbils).

3.2 The number of animals kept for the activity at any time must not exceed the maximum that is reasonable taking into account the facilities and staffing on any premises used for the licensable activity.

The licence conditions must clearly state the maximum number for each species that may be kept on the premises, with the exception of fish. Numbers of fish should not be specified as they are determined by the water quality in the aquarium as set out in part L.

If there are more of any species than stated on the licence, this would be a breach of the licence, especially if not reflected in increased staffing levels.

The operator must adhere to the stocking densities for each species in the relevant annexes.

4.0 Staffing

4.1 Sufficient numbers of people who are competent for the purpose must be available to provide a level of care that ensures that the welfare needs of all the animals are met.

At least one member of staff on site during opening hours must:

- be familiar with the care and welfare of the animals
- have a recognised qualification or be able to demonstrate suitable experience or training

If welfare needs of the animals are not being met, consider if there are enough staff onsite. Consider any site-specific and automated processes that may affect staff levels.

Licence holders keeping venomous species hazardous to human health must ensure that sufficient staff are trained or have experience in the species management.

Written health care instructions must be provided for staff in case of an incident involving any venomous animal and a visitor or staff member. These procedures must be followed.

4.2 The licence holder or a designated manager and any staff employed to care for the animals must have competence to identify the normal behaviour of the species for which they are caring and to recognise signs of and take appropriate measures to mitigate or prevent, pain, suffering, injury, disease or abnormal behaviour.

Staff must be trained and be able to carry out the following tasks:

- animal welfare, including recognising poor welfare
- animal handling
- animal behaviour
- cleanliness and hygiene
- feeding and preparing food
- preventing and controlling disease
- recognising sick or injured animals
- giving first aid

There must be a record of all staff training

Animals must be handled and cared for by staff with the appropriate ability, knowledge and professional competence.

Staff must either:

- hold a formal qualification such as a Level 2 Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) regulated qualification appropriate for their role
- show they have relevant experience

Where no accredited training course exists for an activity, other evidence of training, such as industry generated courses, must be provided.

Staff who have taken an Ofqual regulated qualification must show that they have progressed with their study in a 12 month period and must complete the qualification within 2 years.

4.3 The licence holder must provide and ensure the implementation of a written training policy for all staff.

The training policy must be reviewed and updated annually, and must include:

- an annual appraisal
- planned continued professional development
- recognition of any knowledge gaps

If no staff are employed, the licence holder must demonstrate their own knowledge development.

The participation of the staff can be shown by:

- records of courses they are taking
- records of written or online learning
- keeping up to date with any research or developments for animals sold as part of the business
- annual appraisal documents

This applies to all staff including the licence holder.

Evidence of staff attendance or completion of the training must be provided.

Optional higher standard for staffing

There must be a member of permanent, full-time staff with an ~~Ofqual~~ regulated Level 3 qualification that is appropriate to the species kept.

5.0 Suitable environment

5.1 All areas, equipment and appliances that animals can access must present minimal risks of injury, illness and escape.

They must be constructed in materials that are:

- robust
- safe and durable
- in a good state of repair
- well-maintained

Housing must be secure in order to prevent injuries and reduce risk of disease transmission. The housing must be secure and kept in good repair. It must be designed to ensure dry, and easily cleaned surfaces, including junctions where parts of the housing join. This does apply to non-aquatic species. Materials must be non-toxic and constructed of non-porous materials, or be appropriately treated.

Housing must be inspected regularly. Any part which is damaged, may cause injury, or offer an animal the opportunity to escape must be repaired or replaced immediately.

Hazards must be minimised. There must not be any sharp edges, projections, rough edges or other hazards which could injure an animal.

Electrical cables must be out of reach of any animal that could chew or damage them.

All licence holders must be able to show that they have considered both environmental and biosecurity (including zoonotic disease) risks in their choice of enclosure, and how they use it.

Drainage in enclosures, activity areas, passageways and preparation areas must be adequate to reduce the risk of pathogens in standing water.

Where a pest problem is identified a control programme must be implemented.

5.2 Animals must be kept at all times in an environment suitable to their species and condition (including health status and age) with respect to:

- (a) their behavioural needs
- (b) its situation, space, air quality, cleanliness and temperature
- (c) the water quality (where relevant)
- (d) noise levels
- (e) light levels

(f) ventilation

Animals must be able to climb, fly, swim, jump and move around freely where appropriate, and exhibit normal behaviour in their environment.

Housing must provide shelter from adverse weather and predators.

Enclosures must be appropriate to the size of the species. They must adjust in size as the animal grows. Animals kept communally may need to be separated or need larger enclosures if there is any change in group dynamics.

Whilst animals are offered for sale, the business is considered a short-term transitional holding facility. Because of this, it may be acceptable to have enclosures of smaller sizes than those intended for long term care. These sizes are outlined for each taxonomic group within the individual schedules and take into account specific stocking density.

The transitional period is to be no more than 3 months from the date of arrival. If an animal is kept for longer or permanently, the animal must be moved to an enclosure of a size that is of best practice for the individual species. The enclosure must be comparable with what you would expect the final purchaser to use. At a minimum this must be equivalent, or preferably larger, to those described in the higher standard minimum enclosure size for each species.

For businesses selling animals exclusively to other businesses, there are currently no agreed standards for cage sizes and stocking densities. Businesses must provide evidence to demonstrate that the animals' welfare needs are being met, with reference to the guidance in the rest of this document. This does not apply to businesses selling dogs and cats. The size of housing for cats and dogs must meet the requirements in the guidance.

a) Behavioural needs

Where appropriate, animals must have separate areas for hiding, sleeping, toileting and exercising. Sleeping areas must be dry, draught-free, well ventilated and clean as well as large enough to allow all the animals housed to rest together fully outstretched where appropriate and turn around unimpeded. Any substrate used must be appropriate to the species concerned.

b) Situation, space, air quality, cleanliness and temperature

Licence holders must ensure that environmental conditions such as temperature, relative humidity, ventilation, lighting conditions are carefully controlled at all times. Conditions must be monitored and remain within the appropriate range for the species housed.

A record should be kept of any instances where conditions fall outside of the appropriate ranges, and what corrective actions were taken. Staff must be able to outline the remedial action taken.

Over-exposure to direct sunlight and other unintended heat sources must be avoided.

Animals held or displayed outdoors must always have access to suitable protection from adverse weather conditions. Animals must not be exposed to draughts.

c) Water quality (where relevant)

For species where water quality forms an integral part of life, or where poor water quality has welfare implications, water quality must be tested and recorded. The frequency of testing must be appropriate to the system, but must be at least weekly. Records must detail any action taken to restore the water to acceptable conditions.

d) Noise levels

Noise and vibration must be maintained at levels appropriate to species. Enclosures must be situated away from noise sources likely to cause stress or disturbance.

e) Light levels

Light must be provided in a suitable natural cycle for the species. If there is not enough natural light there must be suitable artificial lighting.

f) Ventilation

All inside areas must be well ventilated, but animals must not be exposed to draughts. The ventilation must not make areas too cold, hot or humid.

Humidity must be appropriate for the species.

5.3 Staff must ensure that the animals are kept clean and comfortable

Where housing is on a tiered system, water, food or waste products must not be allowed to contaminate lower levels. In certain systems, such as aquaria or mixed-species aviaries, where separation of the animals is inappropriate, waste must be managed to prevent contamination of food and water.

5.4 Where appropriate for the species, a toileting area and opportunities for toileting must be provided.

5.5 Procedures must be in place to make sure housing and any equipment within it is cleaned as often as necessary and good hygiene standards are maintained. The housing must be capable of being thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Housing must be cleaned and disinfected with products effective against likely pathogens. At normal usage levels, disinfectants must be non-toxic to the species housed and used at an appropriate dilution and as per the manufacturer's instructions. There must be the correct length of time between disinfection and introduction or reintroduction of livestock.

Soiled bedding must be removed promptly and immediately replaced.

Empty enclosures must be fully cleaned, disinfected and allowed to dry when vacated and before new stock arrives. Substrate must be replaced as appropriate, and enclosure fixtures and fittings must be adequately disinfected.

Enclosures must be spot-cleaned at least daily and more so if necessary, unless this has negative effects on the welfare of the animals.

5.6 The animals must be transported and handled in a manner (including for example in relation to housing, temperature, ventilation and frequency) that protects them from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

All animals must be transported according to the [regulations laid down in current legislation \(https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/3260/made\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/3260/made).

Predators and prey must not be able to see, hear or smell each other during transport.

The licence holder must demonstrate that a suitable vehicle is available to transport the animals. It does not have to be owned by the licence holder.

Vehicles must be cleaned and disinfected after each collection and delivery except where animals are transported in closed containers. The closed containers should be cleaned after each use.

Animals must be transported in suitable containers and must not be mixed with different species or unfamiliar animals. Where a number of animals are mixed in the same container, the container needs to be of an appropriate size to prevent overcrowding.

Animals must not be left in vehicles for unreasonable periods and must never be left unattended in a car or other vehicle when the temperature may pose a risk to the animal. Consideration must be given to whether it is necessary to transport animals when the climatic conditions pose a risk.

Injured, diseased or ill animals must not be transported unless being taken to a vet, quarantine or isolation facility. When transporting a diseased animal, there must be barriers between containers to reduce the transmission of disease. The vehicle and equipment must be appropriately disinfected following transportation.

5.7 All the animals must be easily accessible to staff and for inspection. There must be sufficient light for the staff to work effectively and observe the animals.

Animals must not be placed on display in a window looking out to public spaces, such as a street.

This is to avoid:

- exposure to direct sunlight
- inappropriate heat levels
- stressful stimuli

Staff must be able to inspect enclosures daily, with minimal disturbance to the animal, unless the species needs more frequent checks (see relevant Schedules).

Consideration must be given to the specific requirements of nocturnal species.

5.8 All resources must be provided in a way (for example as regards frequency, location and access points) that minimises competitive behaviour or the dominance of individual animals.

Resources include, but are not limited to:

- food
- water
- enrichment items, such as toys and blankets

- resting and sleeping areas

There must be sufficient resources for each individual animal in any shared enclosure. This is to minimise dominant behaviour. Where this is identified, more resources must be provided or dominant animals must be removed.

Feeding and play must be separate or supervised where necessary.

Staff must be trained to recognise signs of group disruption (for example, competition and aggression), which could compromise the welfare of the animals.

5.9 The animals must not be left unattended in any situation or for any period likely to cause them distress.

Required higher standard for providing a suitable environment

Businesses selling animals exclusively to other businesses must meet the requirements for cage sizes and stocking densities in the species-specific minimum standards.

6.0 Suitable diet

6.1 The animals must be provided with a suitable diet in terms of quality, quantity and frequency. Any new feeds must be introduced gradually to allow the animals to adjust to them.

The quantity and type of food, frequency of feeding and how animals are fed must be appropriate for the species, the individual's behavioural and nutritional needs.

Staff must know the requirements for all the species for which they are responsible. The person who buys the animal must be advised to continue feeding the diet given by the licence holder initially.

Food supplements, including vitamins and minerals, must be provided if necessary, at the correct dosage for the individual species. This needs to be in a form appropriate to ensure the animal gets adequate supplements.

Fresh foods must be kept refrigerated where necessary. Frozen foods intended for use must be stored in a deep freeze and defrosted thoroughly to room temperature before use.

Live food must be housed in suitable escape proof containers. If it is not eaten by the animal in a short period, it must be removed so that it cannot harm the species housed (for example, crickets biting reptiles).

Animals should only be fed live vertebrate prey in exceptional circumstances (for example, a snake that isn't eating). A pet shop should only feed live vertebrate prey to the individual animals they have identified as needing it. A written justification must be:

- completed and made available to inspectors
- agreed by senior staff, and include veterinary advice, weighing up the welfare of predator and prey

They must not be fed in the presence of the public.

Animals known to only feed on live prey must be sold only to specialists or institutions. They must not be sold to members of the general public. A competent staff member must observe live feeding. Uneaten prey must be removed promptly.

6.2 Feed and (where appropriate) water intake must be monitored, and any problems recorded and addressed.

Abnormalities in eating and drinking habits must be recorded, reported to the appropriate member of staff and acted upon. Appropriate veterinary advice must be sought if necessary.

Significant weight loss or gain must be assessed by a competent person. Where the underlying reason cannot be identified and remedial measures have been unsuccessful, the animal must be assessed by a vet. If it is housed as part of a social group, the facility must be able to isolate an individual and to tell whether it is eating or not.

For small mammals, guinea pigs, rabbits and birds, a vet must be consulted without delay if:

- there is no improvement in food intake within 12 hours following remedial action taken by a competent person
- the condition of the animal deteriorates

6.3 Feed and drinking water provided to the animals must be unspoilt and free from contamination.

Spoilt perishable foodstuffs must be removed after an appropriate time following a feeding time.

The business must have fridges to store food. High risk feeds (such as cooked or raw meat and fish, or dairy products) and the remains of opened tins or pouches must be stored in covered, non-metal, leak proof containers in the fridge.

6.4 Feed and drinking receptacles must be capable of being cleaned and disinfected, or disposable.

Water and food bowls must be checked daily, cleaned daily as appropriate and disinfected at least weekly.

6.5 Constant access to fresh, clean drinking water must be provided in a suitable receptacle for the species that requires it.

Fresh, clean water must be available at all times. This is except for those species where it may be harmful, and when water supplies are being changed, for example when water bottles are removed for filling.

Water bottles must be free flowing and free from leakages and blockages.

Water must be located away from the sleeping area to help prevent this becoming damp or waterlogged if the bottle leaks.

Raptors should be provided daily with fresh clean water in a bath. This should be removed during freezing weather, where they are kept outdoors, to avoid health problems.

6.6 Where feed is prepared on the premises used for the licensable activity, there must be hygienic facilities for its preparation, including a working surface, hot and cold running water and storage.

Staff must maintain high standards of personal hygiene. They must follow good hygiene practices when preparing food. They need to be aware of the risk of cross contamination between equipment, utensils and surfaces. There must be appropriate disinfectants available to clean the food preparation area immediately following its use.

A separate hand wash basin with an adequate supply of hot and cold water must be provided for staff to wash their hands. This must be connected to a suitable drainage system.

Food must be fit for consumption protected against dampness, deterioration, mould or from contamination by insects, birds, vermin or other pests.

The food preparation area must be kept clean and vermin free.

Human and animal food preparation must not take place in shared preparation areas at the same time or using shared utensils.

Where fresh food is used, there must be fridges.

Staff must not use receptacles for an animal's food and drink for any other purposes.

7.0 Monitoring behaviour and training

7.1 Active and effective environmental enrichment must be provided for the animals in inside and any outside environments.

Environmental enrichment accessories which stimulate natural behaviour must be provided as appropriate to the species maintained. These must not have the potential to cause welfare concerns, such as injury. They must be replaced if damaged.

As appropriate to the species, enrichment devices must be changed on a regular basis to introduce novelty and maintain interest. When adding new enrichment devices, staff must ensure that the animal is closely monitored for signs of distress.

Accessories must be disposable or be disinfected between animals.

7.2 For species whose welfare depends partly on exercise, opportunities to exercise which benefit the animals' physical and mental health must be provided, unless advice from a vet suggests otherwise.

Animals must be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns. They may need additional suitable space for exercise.

All animals must have daily exercise, as appropriate for species, age, ability and physical capability. Animals convalescing or within a resting or quarantine period should be allowed rest.

Animals which cannot be exercised for veterinary reasons must be provided with additional enrichment.

7.3 The animals' behaviour and any changes of behaviour must be monitored. Advice must be sought, as appropriate and without delay, from a vet or, in the case of fish, any person competent to give such advice if adverse or abnormal behaviour is detected.

7.4 Where used, training methods or equipment must not cause pain, suffering or injury.

Training must be reward based - rewarding good behaviour and ignoring unwanted behaviour.

7.5 All immature animals must be given suitable and adequate opportunities to:

- (a) learn how to interact with people, their own species and other animals where such interaction benefits their welfare
- (b) become habituated to noises, objects and activities in their environment

Where it will benefit their welfare, young animals must be adequately and appropriately socialised and habituated, by appropriately knowledgeable staff. This is to prevent fear behaviour towards, for example, people, animals, situations and environments they are likely to encounter in their adult lives.

8.0 Animal handling and interactions

8.1 All people responsible for the care of the animals must be competent in the appropriate handling of each animal to protect it from pain, suffering, injury or disease.

When a customer or client is handling an animal, a competent member of staff must supervise and ensure the interaction is appropriate. They must stop the handling if the animal shows signs of fear, suffering or fatigue.

Animals which may be aggressive must only be handled by, or in the presence of, competent staff.

Customers must be offered and encouraged to use facilities to clean and sanitise their hands before and after handling, especially if they have had contact with faeces or urine.

8.2 The animals must be kept separately or in suitable compatible social groups appropriate to the species and individual animals. No animals from a social species may be isolated or separated from others of their species for any longer than is necessary.

Where appropriate, all animals must be housed in social groups of suitable size. Group-housed animals must be monitored. Remedial action must be taken and documented if there are any signs of group disruption.

Social species can be isolated or separated if remedial action hasn't worked and an animal shows signs of:

- disease
- injury
- danger
- stress

All animals must be sexed immediately on arrival to the premises and housed in single sex groups where appropriate to avoid unwanted litters. This does not apply if it would compromise welfare (for example, separating a litter of puppies).

8.3 The animals must have at least daily opportunities to interact with people where such interaction benefits their welfare.

Animals must never be forced to interact with people and must be able to avoid people. For example, they should have access to a hiding place, unless this would adversely impact their welfare. Interaction includes handling and non-physical interactions with people.

9.0 Protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease

9.1 Written procedures must:

(a) be in place and implemented covering

(i) feeding regimes

(ii) cleaning regimes

(iii) transportation

(iv) the prevention of, and control of the spread of, disease

(v) monitoring and ensuring the health and welfare of all the animals

(vi) the death or escape of an animal (including the storage of carcasses)

(b) be in place covering the care of the animals following the suspension or revocation of the licence or during and following an emergency

Written procedures should be proportional to the size, and reflect the complexity of, the business. The written procedures must be made available to the inspectors. All people responsible for the care of the animals must be made fully aware of these procedures.

These procedures must demonstrate how the conditions outlined in this guidance are met.

9.2 All people responsible for the care of the animals must be made fully aware of these procedures.

9.3 Appropriate isolation, in self-contained facilities, must be available for the care of sick, injured or potentially infectious animals.

The facility must be able to isolate animals that are sick, injured or infectious or might be carrying serious infectious diseases.

Adequate isolation facilities may be provided:

- on site or at another location, such as a local veterinary practice or wholesale
- through changes in management, such as closing the pet shop, or a room in the shop

Isolation plans must be documented in written procedures.

If the isolation facility is at another location, the licence holder must be able to show that the location is prepared to provide such facilities - for example, a letter from the veterinary practice.

All staff must understand the procedures to prevent the spread of infectious disease between animals.

Staff must check animals in the isolation facility at least as frequently as other animals. Unless a separate person is looking after them, animals in isolation must be checked after all the other animals.

Where infectious disease is present in a premises:

- the facility must use barrier nursing procedures
- staff should wear protective clothing and footwear (where applicable) and change these between enclosures
- equipment must be stored separately, including cleaning utensils
- waste must be segregated

Isolated animals must be kept in a secure, comfortable location where their condition and needs can be monitored and a record kept of their treatment.

Sick animals must not be handled by members of the public.

9.4 All reasonable precautions must be taken to prevent and control the spread among animals and people of infectious diseases and parasites.

Signage, care information and or staff must inform customers about the risks of infectious disease transmission.

An animal which is suffering from, or could reasonably be suspected of having come into contact with any other animal suffering from any infectious or contagious disease or which is clinically infested with parasites, must not be brought into or kept on the premises unless effectively isolated.

9.5 All excreta and soiled bedding for disposal must be stored and disposed of in a hygienic manner and in accordance with any relevant legislation.

Excreta and soiled bedding must be removed from the premises on a regular basis. Disposal must happen at least weekly.

The disposal method should:

- satisfy the local authority
- be in accordance with current regulations
- follow good waste management practice

All excreta and soiled bedding must be stored away from where food and animals are kept.

9.6 Sick or injured animals must receive prompt attention from a vet or, in the case of fish, an appropriately competent person and the advice of that vet or, in the case of fish, that competent person must be followed.

Any sick or injured animal must receive appropriate care and treatment without delay. Only competent staff or vets must treat sick and injured animals. 'Care and treatment' may include euthanasia.

Where an animal shows signs of disease, injury or illness it must be kept separate from the other animals. A vet, or a competent person in the case of fish, must be contacted for advice within 24 hours, unless otherwise stated in species specific Schedules. Any instructions for its treatment must be strictly followed.

9.7 Where necessary, animals must receive preventative treatment by an appropriately competent person.

9.8 The licence holder must register with a vet with an appropriate level of experience in the health and welfare requirements of any animals specified in the licence and the contact details of that vet must be readily available to all staff on the premises used for the licensable activity.

The vet's details must be displayed where they can be easily seen by all staff members.

This must include:

- name
- address
- telephone number
- out of hours telephone number

Where there is a lack of local veterinary expertise with regard to the species being sold then a competent secondary veterinary practice must provide support to the primary practice.

9.9 Prescribed medicines must be stored safely and securely to safeguard against unauthorised access, at the correct temperature, and used in accordance with the instructions of the vet.

Any prescribed medication given must be prescribed for the individual animal by a vet, and each instance of use must be recorded.

9.10 Medicines other than prescribed medicines must be stored, used and disposed of in accordance with the instructions of the manufacturer or vet.

9.11 Cleaning products must be suitable, safe and effective against pathogens that pose a risk to the animals. They must be used, stored and disposed of in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and used in a way which prevents distress or suffering of the animals.

The compatibility of different bactericides, fungicides and virucides (if used together or with a detergent) must be considered.

Manufacturers' recommended guidelines for use, correct dilutions and contact time for use in cleaning and disinfection procedures must be followed.

Any equipment that has been used on an infectious or suspected infectious animal must be cleaned and disinfected after use.

9.12 No person may euthanise an animal except a vet or a person who has been authorised by a vet as competent for such purpose or:

- (a) in the case of fish, a person who is competent for such purpose
- (b) in the case of horses, a person who is competent, and who holds a licence or certificate, for such purpose

Where euthanasia is not carried out by or under the direct supervision of a vet, these details must be recorded:

- the reason why the animal was euthanised
- the method used
- the member of staff carrying out the euthanasia

These records must be made available at subsequent inspections. This does not apply to fish.

Where a licence holder is breeding or purchasing live vertebrate animals to be euthanised and fed to other stock held on the premises, a vet must assess the method of euthanasia.

The vet must sign off that they are satisfied the method is humane and effective and will continue to be. The method of euthanasia must be safe and humane for both the culled animal and the animal being fed.

An animal must only be euthanised humanely and effectively. If you have any doubt about whether methods are humane and effective you must get veterinary advice.

9.13 All animals must be checked at least once daily and more regularly as necessary to check for any signs of pain, suffering, injury, disease or abnormal behaviour. Vulnerable animals must be checked more frequently.

9.14 Any signs of pain, suffering, injury, disease or abnormal behaviour must be recorded and the advice and further advice (if necessary) of a vet (or in the case of fish, of an appropriately competent person) must be sought and followed.

Checks must not cause unnecessary stress or disturbance. Visual checks are acceptable.

A system of recording abnormalities must be maintained.

Where necessary for specific species, vulnerable animals, such as young, whelping, sick or injured animals, must be checked more frequently than the minimum once daily.

10.0 Emergencies

10.1 A written emergency plan, acceptable to the local authority, must be in place, known and available to all staff on the premises used for the licensable activity, and followed where necessary to ensure appropriate steps are taken to protect all the people and animals on the premises in case of fire or in case of breakdowns for essential heating, ventilation and aeration or

filtration systems or other emergencies.

Staff must be aware of the emergency procedures. A copy must be displayed for staff to refer to.

Suitable emergency response plans must cover arrangements for:

- emergency evacuation
- housing
- husbandry
- loss of services such as, power and water

Emergency evacuation must detail:

- how (and by what means) animals, staff and the public evacuate the facility
- identify designated fire assembly points
- designated holding areas for animals
- which animals can and cannot be evacuated (such as, aquaria and ponds)

The business must have a procedure for how they would remove all animals in the event of an emergency. Where emergencies are potentially life threatening, humans must not be put at risk attempting to remove animals.

Emergency plans must consider business continuity management. This includes what to do in the case of life support failure, power cut or other utility failures that will have direct impacts on animal welfare.

Emergency drills must be regularly practised. Practices must be recorded with any failings noted and addressed in the procedures. Drills must be undertaken at least annually, or as determined by fire risk assessments.

All staff must undergo regular training. Records must be kept of such training. Sufficient nominated staff must be properly trained on the use of equipment provided.

The emergency plan must include a list of any species held on site that are listed on the current [Schedule of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act \(https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1976/38\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1976/38). There must be a specific action plan for how they will be removed safely and rehomed immediately and appropriately in the case of emergency.

Entrances and fire exits must always be clear of obstructions.

Businesses must comply with current health and safety, fire and electrical safety regulations.

There must be an effective contingency plan for essential heating, ventilation, and aeration or filtration systems, where they are needed.

All equipment must be maintained in a good state of repair and serviced according to manufacturer's guidelines.

10.2 The plan must include details of the emergency measures to be taken for the extrication of the animals should the premises become uninhabitable and an emergency telephone list that includes the fire service and police.

10.3 External doors and gates must be lockable.

10.4 A designated key holder with access to all animal areas must at all times be within reasonable travel distance of the premises and available to attend in an emergency.

A reasonable distance would, in normal conditions, be interpreted as no more than 30 minutes travelling time.

When the licensed premises are sited within other premises, the licensee or key holders must have access at all times to the premises containing the animals.

Part B – Specific conditions: selling animals as pets (schedule 3 of the regulations)

2.0 Records and advertisements

2.1 A register must be maintained for all the animals or, in the case of fish, all the groups of fish, on the premises.

The register where they are kept for sale which must include:

- (a) the full name of the supplier of the animal
- (b) the animal's sex (where known)
- (c) except in the case of fish, the animal's age (where known)

(d) details of any veterinary treatment (where known)

(e) the date of birth of the animal or, if the animal was acquired by the licence holder, the date of its acquisition

(f) the date of sale of the animal by the licence holder

(g) the date of the animal's death (if applicable)

The register can be a stand-alone dedicated document or can be business records, such as invoices and proof of sales receipts. It must accurately represent acquisitions and sales. This can be a centralised system but must be accessible in store.

Deaths can be recorded as part of daily observational records or as a standalone document. Actions taken following any unusual mortality must also be recorded. For fish, deaths should be recorded when mortality exceeds 5% of animals on site, over a 24 hour period.

The register must include details of the supplier of the animals.

The register must be available for inspection by the appropriate authority.

2.2 Where an animal is undergoing any medical treatment:

(a) this fact must be clearly indicated either in writing next to it or (where appropriate) by labelling it accordingly

(b) it must not be sold

Any animal with an abnormality which would affect its quality of life must not be offered for sale. If an animal is being treated and it is in their best welfare interests to remain in their enclosure they can remain on display but must be clearly marked as under treatment.

When in doubt, the business must seek veterinary advice. In the case of fish, this should be a competent person.

Treatment administered as part of preventative medicine protocols where there is no known disease or contact with known diseased animals (for example, worming treatment) is not considered an animal under treatment.

2.3 Any advertisement for the sale of an animal must:

(a) include the number of the licence holder's licence

(b) specify the local authority that issued the licence

(c) include a recognisable photograph of the animal being advertised

(d) display the age of the animal being advertised (except in the case of fish)

(e) state the country of residence of the animal from which it is being sold

(f) state the country of origin of the animal

An advert refers to those used to advertise an animal to the public. It does not include internal sales in store and business to business sales.

Adverts for dogs and cats must use a specific photograph. For other species, a stock photograph of the species is acceptable.

The country of origin must refer to the country of birth of the specific animal. Where this is not known this can be the country of export of the specific animal.

3.0 Prospective sales: pet care and advice

3.1 The licence holder and all staff must ensure that any equipment and accessories being sold with an animal are suitable for the animal.

The business must advise buyers on housing size that exceeds the minimum sizes in this guide. When a business sells an animal to the public, they should advise on enclosure size that represents or exceeds the current higher standards listed in the species specific schedules.

Staff must be able to provide the correct advice regarding the suitability of items for sale on the premises.

3.2 The licence holder and all staff must ensure that the prospective owner is provided with information on the appropriate care of the animal including in relation to:

(a) feeding

(b) housing

(c) handling

(d) husbandry

(e) the life expectancy of its species

(f) the provision of suitable accessories

(g) veterinary care

Pet care leaflets or other similar written or electronic instructions must be given at the point of sale to encourage responsible pet ownership. They should refer to an owner's obligations in the Animal Welfare Act (2006). They must outline the 5 welfare needs set out in the Act.

Staff have the right to refuse a sale if they are concerned or are not satisfied to the best of their knowledge that the prospective owner is able to meet that animal's welfare needs.

Advice must be given on microchipping as relevant to the species.

Dogs - care and advice

The business must give the buyer advice on:

- updating microchip registration
- vaccinations
- socialisation
- neutering

If the new owner will put puppies on to a different food, a transitional feeding schedule must be provided. This must show the day by day ratio of old food and new food.

A puppy contract and puppy information pack must be provided at the point of sale.

Cats - care and advice

The business must give the buyer advice on:

- microchip registration
- vaccinations
- socialisation
- neutering

If the new owner is going to feed kittens different food, a transitional feeding schedule must be provided. This must show the day by day ratio of old food and new food.

A kitten checklist must be provided at the point of sale.

Small rodents - care and advice

The business must give the buyer advice on:

- compatible group size and gender
- diet
- housing
- socialisation
- behaviours

Advice should be given on recognising basic signs of wellbeing or ill health in the relevant species.

Rabbits - care and advice

Where sold singly, the licence holder or staff must ask if the purchaser owns a suitable conspecific. If they do not, the business should encourage them to buy one, or check that they have a care plan in place for a single housed rabbit.

The business must give the buyer advice on vaccinations and reproductive health care.

Ferrets - care and advice

The business must give advice on:

- vaccinations
- socialisation
- reproductive management

Birds - care and advice

If parrots are sold singly then the business should explain to the buyer the bird's need for daily companionship. The sale of parrots to purchasers who are unable to provide a suitable enclosure and suitable mental stimulation should be discouraged.

The need for high quality lighting of a suitable spectrum should be explained to buyers.

Reptiles - care and advice

The business must give the buyer advice on environmental conditions.

Fish - care and advice

The business must give the buyer advice on environmental conditions and water quality.

3.3 Appropriate reference materials on the care of all animals for sale must be on display and provided to the prospective owner.

Pet care leaflets or other similar written or electronic information must be made available to customers free of charge at the time of purchase. This is in addition to any offer to purchase pet care books or leaflets.

You can use the following information:

- [Code of practice for the welfare of cats \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-for-the-welfare-of-cats\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-for-the-welfare-of-cats)
- [Code of practice for the welfare of dogs \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-for-the-welfare-of-dogs\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-for-the-welfare-of-dogs)

3.4 The licence holder and all staff must have been suitably trained to advise prospective owners about the animals being sold.

3.5 The licence holder and sales staff must ensure that the purchaser is informed of the country of origin of the animal and the species, and where known, the age, sex and veterinary record of the animal being sold.

This must also include whether the animal was wild caught or captive bred, where known.

4.0 Suitable housing

4.1 Animals must be kept in housing which minimises stress from other animals and the public.

The design and layout of the premises must allow animals to be able to choose what they can see and who or what, for example they should be able to hide. It should also minimise the number of animals that staff disturb when removing any individual animal.

Predators and prey should not be able to see, hear or smell each other.

4.2 Where members of the public can view or come into contact with the animals, signage must be in place to deter disturbance of the animals.

If animals are on public display, signs must be displayed on enclosures to deter members of the public from tapping on glass or poking fingers into cages.

Clear signs must be in place at all times outlining:

- health and safety risk to customers
- appropriate behaviour around the specific species

Other measures may be required, such as, limiting access to some sides of animal enclosures.

4.3 Dangerous wild animals (if any) must be kept in enclosures that are secure and lockable and appropriate for the species.

Licence holders keeping species listed on the [Dangerous Wild Animal Act \(DWAA\) Schedule \(https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2007/2465/schedule/made\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2007/2465/schedule/made) must be able to demonstrate that they have considered safety of staff and the general public:

- in the design of the enclosures

- in the layout of the premises
- where the animals are kept
- the design of any safety barriers

The design of enclosures must help to prevent animals from escaping.

Licence holders selling animals on the Schedule to the DWAA must inform:

- the purchaser that they need a licence under the DWAA
- their licence issuing authority of the details of the purchase - their authority will have issued them with the licence to keep or sell an animal that is listed under the DWAA

Whilst pet shops are exempt from the DWAA, consideration must be given to complying with any special requirements specified in the DWAA for the safe housing and care of any DWAA listed animal.

5.0 Buying and selling animals

5.1 The purchase, or sale, by or on behalf of the licence holder of any of the following is prohibited:

- (a) unweaned mammals
- (b) mammals weaned at an age at which they should not have been weaned
- (c) non-mammals that are incapable of feeding themselves
- (d) puppies, cats, ferrets or rabbits, aged under 8 weeks
- (e) puppies or kittens which were not bred by the licence holder

Dogs, cats and ferrets must remain with their mother for the first 8 weeks of life unless the mother dies or there is a health risk to the offspring from remaining with her. Where necessary, a vet or certified clinical animal behaviourist may certify that it is in the best interests of the animal to be removed earlier.

Puppies and kittens can only be sold by their breeder. The breeder must be the same named individual as the licence holder on the pet selling licence.

The [guidance on dog breeding](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-activities-licensing-guidance-for-local-authorities/dog-breeding-licensing-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-activities-licensing-guidance-for-local-authorities/dog-breeding-licensing-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities>) sets out what licence conditions apply to that activity.

The licence holder must be able to prove that they have bred the puppies or kittens by providing evidence that they had control over the decisions for the complete reproductive process from dam or sire selection, conception and gestation to birth.

The inspector must be shown records of the matings for dogs and cats including:

- the location of mating or fertilisation (including where this may have occurred on other premises)
- the identity of the sire (where known)
- how and where the animals are born, reared and kept until sale

Businesses selling dogs and cats should expect prospective buyers to ask to see the offspring with the mother before making any purchasing decisions. The inspector should view:

- the mother and the offspring in the environment that will be used for potential buyers
- licence holders' supporting evidence such as photographs, microchip and veterinary records to show that they housed and cared for the animal and its mother for the first 8 weeks of its life

5.2 The sale of a dog must be completed in the presence of the purchaser on the premises.

6.0 Protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease

6.1 All animals for sale must be in good health

Animals must be allowed to acclimatise before being offered for sale. Where animals are obtained for sale to a specific client it may be acceptable for the animal to be sold immediately.

Acclimatisation periods

Species or group	Suitable acclimatisation period
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Species or group	Suitable acclimatisation period
Rabbits	2 to 3 days
Guinea pigs	2 to 3 days
Chinchilla	2 to 3 days
Small mammals	1 to 2 days
Birds	Until feeding and behaving normally for the species
Reptiles and amphibians	Until feeding and behaving normally for the species
Fish	Until feeding and behaving normally for the species

6.2 Any animal with a condition which is likely to affect materially its quality of life must not be moved, transferred or offered for sale but may be moved to an isolation facility or veterinary care facility if required until the animal has recovered.

6.3 When arranging for the receipt of animals, the licence holder must make reasonable efforts to ensure that they will be transported in a suitable manner.

6.4 Animals must be transported or handed to purchasers in suitable containers for the species and expected duration of the journey.

Required higher standard for protecting pets from pain, suffering, injury and disease

A documented health checklist should be completed daily and must cover physical, psychological, and behavioural issues and any abnormality recorded.

Part C – Selling dogs

4.0 Staffing for businesses selling dogs

There must be adequate staffing to feed and socialise puppies every 4 to 5 hours and a minimum of 4 times over a 16 hour period.

Dogs must not be left for long periods without being assessed. Dogs must be checked:

- every 4 hours during the working day
- at least once during the overnight period and outside of normal working hours

Required higher standard for staffing

There must be adequate staffing to undertake more regular checks than required by the minimum standard.

5.0 Suitable environments for selling dogs

Businesses must prevent the risk of injury, illness and escape.

Home environment for businesses selling dogs

The inside and outside of the buildings must be maintained in good repair. Outer paths, gardens, exercise areas and general surroundings must be kept in a good, clean presentable condition.

There must not be any sharp edges, projections, rough edges or other hazards which present risk of injury to a dog. If timber is used it must be of good quality, well-kept and any damaged areas sealed or over-clad. Exposed wood must be smooth, treated and properly maintained to render it waterproof. All structural exterior wood such as fence posts must be properly treated against wood rot. Only non-toxic products may be used.

Standing water from cleaning or urine is not acceptable. Drainage must be permanently unblocked, with liquids able to run off into drains immediately.

Any drain covers in areas where dogs have access must be secure and designed and located to prevent toes or claws from being caught.

All interior surfaces to which dogs have access must be cleaned regularly and maintained in good order and repair. Wherever possible, interior surfaces must be smooth, waterproof and able to be cleaned. Floors must be non-hazardous for dogs to walk on, in particular to avoid slipping.

Doors and windows to the outside must be:

- escape proof
- securable
- strong enough to resist impact and scratching, and to prevent injury

External doors and gates must be lockable. Those involved in the care of the dogs must have easy access to keys or key codes in case of emergency.

There must be at least 2 secure physical barriers (for example, doors or gates) between a dog and any entrance or exit to the property to the outer curtilage to avoid escape.

All outdoor fencing must be strong and rigid. It must be of sufficient height and kept in good repair. It must prevent an animal escaping over, through or digging under the structure. Where dogs have access to mesh, the diameter of the wire must not be less than 2 millimetres (British Standard 14 gauge welded mesh). Square mesh size must not exceed 50 millimetres by 50 millimetres and for chain link it must not exceed 75 millimetres by 50 millimetres. Gaps or apertures must be small enough to prevent a dog's head passing through, or entrapment of any limb or body parts.

Any electrical sockets and appliances in the dog designated rooms and where the dogs have access to must be secure and protected against damage.

Kennel environment for businesses selling dogs

Unit doors must open inwards to protect the health and safety of attending staff. Where this is not feasible there must be a documented procedure in place to demonstrate the safety of staff.

Door openings must be constructed so that the passage of water and waste is not impeded, or allowed to gather due to inaccessibility.

Access doors must not be propped open.

For kennels where there are facing dog units accessed by an indoor corridor, the corridor must be at least 1.2 metres wide. If this is not feasible, demonstrable measures must be in place to protect the safety of staff, such as routes taken to remove dogs from kennel units and where dogs are placed within the facility.

Kennels and runs must open onto secure corridors or other secure areas so that dogs are not able to escape from the premises. These corridors and areas must not be used as an exercise area.

Each unit must have a minimum headroom height of 2 metres and be designed to allow staff to access dogs and clean all parts of the unit safely. Where this is not feasible there must be a documented procedure in place to demonstrate the safety of staff.

Where new kennels are built, they must be built in compliance with good building practice, on a concrete base with a damp proof membrane.

Environmental conditions for dogs (including enclosure sizes)

Dogs must be monitored to check if they are too hot or too cold. If an individual dog is showing signs of heat or cold intolerance, steps must be taken to ensure the welfare of the dog.

A dog must be able to remove itself from a direct source of heat.

Dogs (particularly puppies) may be adversely affected by the sound of other barking dogs. Dogs under one year of age must be located in the quietest part of the facility.

The kennel area must be large enough to allow for separate sleeping and activity areas. The kennel must allow each dog to be able to walk, turn around and wag its tail without touching the sides of the kennel. The dogs must have sufficient room to play, stand on their hind limbs and to lie down without touching another individual. The kennel size required will increase in relation to the size and number of dogs housed at any one time. The length and width must be sufficient to allow all the dogs to lie outstretched without their noses or tails touching the walls or other individuals.

Dogs must have free access to the activity area at all times. In certain circumstances, it is permissible to have separate activity areas to sleeping areas but in such cases dogs must be given access to the activity area at regular intervals, at least 4 times a day. Any separate activity area must be fully cleaned and disinfected between use by different groups of dogs.

Where adult dogs are kept, an outdoor exercise area must be available for toileting and exercise. It must be secure and escape proof to allow off lead activity.

Puppies must be housed in litter groups but have the ability to move away from litter mates.

Dogs kept in a domestic premises must have free access in at least one room, providing the size of this room meets the minimum enclosure sizes for dogs.

Bitches with litters must be provided with double the space allowance. As puppies grow the space available to them must be increased accordingly.

Minimum kennel sizes for dogs

Dog weight (kg)	Minimum kennel area (m ²)	Additional area per additional dog (m ²)
Less than 5	4.0	0.5
Over 5 to 10	4.0	1.0
Over 10 to 15	4.0	1.5
Over 15 to 20	4.0	2.0
Over 20 to 30	8.0	4.0
Over 30	These sizes must be scaled up accordingly and must be proportionate	These sizes must be scaled up accordingly and must be proportionate

Bedding and substrate for dogs

Beds and bedding must be provided and be suitable to allow dogs to be comfortable. A dog bed must be:

- of a durable construction
- situated away from draughts
- be a suitable size for the breed of dogs kept
- large enough for each dog to be able to lie flat on its side

Bedding must be kept clean, dry and parasite free. It must be cleaned and disinfected between new dogs.

Bedding must be capable of being easily cleaned and disinfected, or disposable, and all bedding material in use must be clean, non-irritant and dry. Any bedding must be soft and absorbent.

There must be some part of the sleeping area maintained at a minimum temperature relevant to the breed and type of dog. For most this is likely to be between 15°C and 26°C. Certain breeds may need extra consideration (for example, huskies).

Cleaning dogs and kennels

Each occupied kennel must be cleaned daily at a minimum.

Occupied kennels, including outside runs, must be inspected and cleaned daily, following the documented cleaning and disinfection procedure.

Kennels must be disinfected at least once a week and when there is an occupancy change.

Where a pest problem is identified, a pest control programme must be implemented.

Dogs must be removed from the area whilst it is being cleaned.

All dogs kept must benefit from adequate routine grooming and other health regimes as needed (for example, cleaning of eyes or keeping long fur from matting).

Toileting dogs

Dogs must have regular opportunities during the day for toileting, taking into account individual needs.

The toileting area must be separate from the bedding area, and puppy pads or similar material must be provided with the quantity determined by the number of puppies.

Faeces must be removed from the kennel units as often as necessary and in any case a minimum of twice a day.

For kennelled dogs, there must be direct and continuous access to a run for toileting or the dog must be taken out of the kennel unit to toilet for example during exercise.

In a home environment dogs will have access to a secure outside area for toileting.

Transporting and handling dogs

All animals must be transported according to the regulations laid down in current legislation.

The licence holder must demonstrate that a suitable vehicle is available to transport the dogs. It does not have to be owned by the licence holder.

During transport, dogs must be suitably restrained to prevent injury using a dog crate, transport harness or dog guard. Dog crates need to be of adequate size to ensure that the dog can stand, lie down and turn around freely. Crates must be designed to provide good ventilation and firmly secured.

Vehicles must be cleaned and disinfected after each collection or delivery of any new dogs.

Dogs must not be left in vehicles for unreasonable periods and must never be left unattended in a car or other vehicle where the temperature may pose a risk to the animal. Consideration must be given to whether it is necessary to transport animals when the temperature poses a risk.

Sufficient breaks must be offered for water, food where appropriate and the chance to go to the toilet.

Dogs must be transported to vet facilities in an appropriate manner for their condition ensuring that transport does not cause further suffering. Veterinary advice on the condition of the animal and suitability for transport should be sought before transport.

Required higher standards for providing a suitable environment for dogs

The floor area must be at least 1.5 times larger than the minimum required.

Dogs must be provided with a design and layout that provides them with choice. Separate areas for different activities should be provided. This can be achieved by, for example, inclusion of raised platforms.

Optional higher standards for providing a suitable environment for dogs

Ventilation must be a managed, fixed or portable air system to ensure appropriate temperatures are maintained in all weather. This can be an air conditioning unit or use of removable fans.

6.0 Suitable diet for dogs

Adult dogs must be fed at least once daily and in accordance with the individual dog's needs. Dogs must be fed a complete diet appropriate to their age, breed, activity level and stage in the breeding cycle. You must:

- keep a record of the type, quantity, frequency of food each dog receives must be kept
- seek veterinary advice if there are concerns about an individual dog's diet
- ensure adult dogs must have their own feeding dish
- feed puppies at least 4 times daily at appropriate intervals. The diet must be appropriate for puppies.
- empty and clean food bowls following feeding so that food, particularly wet food, is not left out until the next feeding time
- provide fridges for food storage
- store food away from risk of vermin in cool and dry places

Fresh clean drinking water must be provided daily in a clean container and changed or refreshed as often as necessary.

There must be multiple water bowls provided to ensure all dogs have ready access to water. Veterinary advice must be sought if abnormal drinking patterns are observed.

Monitoring a dogs' diet

Weekly records of weight and body condition score (BCS) must be kept to ensure the health of puppies and adult dogs and to allow any issues to be tracked.

Dogs must not remain inappetent (without appetite) for longer than 24 hours without seeking veterinary advice. If there are specific concerns veterinary advice must be sought earlier.

The general condition of the dogs must be observed and dogs displaying significant weight loss or gain must be evaluated by a vet and treated as necessary.

Required higher standards for dogs' transportation

There must be a travel plan that sets out how animals are managed for long journeys over 4 hours.

7.0 Monitoring dogs' behaviour and training

Each adult dog must have a documented daily exercise regime including lead exercise and free running.

Puppies must be habituated to events likely to be encountered. This must include the sights and sounds in households. Introduction to novel sights and sounds must be gradual so that puppies do not show a fearful response such as startling or withdrawal.

Puppies must also be introduced to a variety of people including adults of both sexes, children of different ages, and people wearing a variety of clothing styles.

Beneficial and positive contact can include grooming, exercise, play, petting and training as appropriate for the individual.

Enrichment for dogs

A documented programme must be available setting out enrichment both inside and outside including grooming, socialisation and play.

All dogs must receive appropriate toys or feeding enrichment (or both) unless veterinary advice suggests otherwise.

All items of enrichment must be checked daily to ensure they remain safe and must not be left with dogs when staff are not on the premises.

Potential competition between dogs must be avoided.

Exercise for dogs

Opportunities to exercise must involve at least one walk per day or access to a secure open space away from the kennel unit. Consideration must be given to life stage, physical and mental health and breed when planning daily exercise.

No more than 6 dogs per person can be walked at one time. Dogs must be familiarised with each other beforehand.

Dogs which cannot be exercised must be provided with alternative forms of mental stimulation.

Dogs must be monitored whilst in outdoor exercise areas.

Dogs must be prevented from having unsupervised access to ponds, pools, wells and any other garden feature that might pose a threat.

Puppies cannot be walked so will require at least 4 opportunities to engage in play and human interaction during the day.

Dog behaviour

The behaviour of individual dogs must be monitored daily. All staff must be able to identify dogs that are anxious or fearful about contact. If a dog shows signs of being nervous, stressed or fearful, steps must be taken to address this.

A daily socialisation and habituation programme must be documented and implemented.

8.0 Handling and interactions with dogs

Dogs must always be handled humanely and appropriately to suit the requirements of the individual dog and to minimise fear, stress, pain and distress. Dogs must never be punished so that they become frightened or display agitated behaviour.

Those involved in the care of dogs must have the competence to handle dogs correctly. They must also have the ability to recognise and act upon undesirable behaviours.

A protocol must be in place for dealing with difficult dogs, to include members of staff appropriately trained in dog handling and the use of appropriate equipment.

A suitable range of muzzles of varying sizes and a suitable dog catching device must be kept on site.

Dogs must be protected from over handling by staff or the public as they require time to rest. Handling of dogs by customers must only take place with potential owners as an element of a socialisation programme.

Puppies - handling and interaction

Weaned puppies must be housed with littermates.

Ideally, single dogs must not be left alone in a kennel, but where they are, special attention must be paid to specific human interaction and additional enrichment. When they are mixed they must be of similar age, temperament and there must be good supervision of mixing.

Puppies from separate litters must be responsibly paired or grouped with the correct monitoring in place, including consideration as to whether separation overnight is appropriate.

A plan must be in place to provide for additional enrichment and socialisation for any puppies that are held for longer than one month.

Required higher standards for handling and interaction with dogs

The last interaction session must take place within one hour before the end of the working day.

9.0 Protecting dogs from pain, suffering, injury and disease

New dogs

In a domestic environment, there must be the capacity for all newly introduced dogs to be kept away from any litters of puppies or places where the litters go.

Preventing disease in dogs

Litters of puppies must not be mixed until they have been on the premises for 7 days or have shown no sign of infectious disease for 7 days.

Excreta from dogs

Excreta must be stored away from areas where animals or food is kept.

Preventative treatment for dogs

Dogs must have current vaccinations (when appropriate for their age) against:

- canine parvovirus
- canine distemper
- canine adenovirus
- infectious canine hepatitis
- leptospirosis
- other relevant diseases

Routine and documented treatment must be in place for internal and external parasites (adult dogs and puppies must be wormed and given flea and tick treatment as appropriate).

Vaccines used must be licensed by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate for use in the UK.

Homoeopathic vaccination is not acceptable.

If there is evidence of external parasites (fleas, ticks, lice) the dog must be treated with a product authorised by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate. Treatment must be discussed with the vet before administration.

Euthanasia for dogs

Dogs must only be euthanised by a vet.

Checking dogs

Premises must have procedures in place for providing for overnight care and during premises closures.

Optional higher standards for vet input for dogs

There must be a routine monthly visit to check health and welfare by the veterinary practice and the veterinary record held.

Optional higher standard for checking dogs

A person that is competent in providing for the welfare of the animals must be on the premises at all times.

Part D – Selling cats

4.0 Staffing for businesses selling cats

There must be adequate staffing to feed and socialise kittens every 4 to 5 hours over a 16 hour period.

Cats must not be left for long periods without being assessed. Cats must be checked at least once in 8 hours during periods when the premises are closed, every 4 hours during normal opening hours and at least once in the overnight period outside normal opening hours.

Required higher standards for staffing

There must be adequate staffing to undertake more frequent checks than required by the minimum standard.

5.0 Suitable environment for selling cats

Businesses must prevent risk of injury, illness and escape.

All windows must be escape and entry proof at all times.

Doors must have secure latches or other closing devices.

Enclosures must be arranged to ensure separated animals are not in direct contact.

Units and exercise areas must open onto secure corridors or other secure areas.

Environmental conditions for cats (including enclosure sizes)

For kittens under 26 weeks, see the [dimensions in the minimum enclosure size](#) you should use.

Cats over 26 weeks must be kept in cattery-style pens. Follow the minimum standards [guidance on providing boarding for cats \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-activities-licensing-guidance-for-local-authorities/cat-boarding-licensing-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-activities-licensing-guidance-for-local-authorities/cat-boarding-licensing-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities).

Cat units must be large enough to allow for separate sleeping and activity areas. The unit must allow each cat to be able to walk and turn around without touching the sides of the unit. The cats must have sufficient room to play, stand on their hind limbs and to lie down without touching another individual.

The unit size required must increase in relation to the size and number of cats housed at any one time. The length and width must be sufficient to allow all the cats to lie outstretched without their noses or tails touching the walls or other individuals.

In certain circumstances it is permissible to have separate exercise areas to sleeping areas but in such cases cats must be given access to the exercise area at least 4 times a day. Any separate exercise area must be fully cleaned and disinfected between use by different litters of cats.

Cats must have access to a variety of levels (for example shelving) in their runs unless advised differently due to a medical condition (for example cage rest). Raised areas must be easily accessible and ramps or steps may need to be used for very young or old cats.

Cats kept in a domestic premises may be kept in one room, providing the size of this room meets the minimum enclosure sizes for cats. Litters of kittens or cats from different sources must not be housed in the same room. If queens are already in a social group in the house, their litters may mix.

Bedding and substrate for cats

Cats must have a warm, soft, sleeping area, away from their litter tray and food. Bedding must be capable of being easily cleaned, disinfected and all bedding material in use must be clean, non-irritant and dry. Any bedding must be soft and absorbent.

All cats must be provided with a bedding area or bench, to allow the animal to lie comfortably.

Temperature for cats

For adult cats, the temperature in the sleeping area must stay between 15°C and 26°C.

Kittens must be provided with additional effective and safe heat sources. Nursing queens must have the opportunity to move away from the kittens and the additional heat source. Kittens without a queen require higher temperatures.

Minimum enclosure size for kittens up to 26 weeks of age

Cats	Minimum floor area (m ²)	Example dimensions (m) width by length	Minimum cage dimensions (m)	Minimum cage height (m)	Additional space
4 kittens, under 12 weeks old	1	1 x 1	0.6	0.6	0.25m ² per kitten
Single cat, 12 to 26 weeks	0.85	0.9 x 0.95	0.9	1.8	-
2 cats, 12 to 26 weeks	1.5	0.9 x 1.66	0.9	1.8	-
3 to 4 cats, 12 to 26 weeks	1.9	0.9 x 2.1	0.9	1.8	-

Cleaning cats and housing

Cats must be separated from the area being cleaned, for example placed in a cat carrier or separate unit.

Where required or beneficial to the individual cats, adequate routine grooming and other health regimes must be carried out, for example cleaning eyes or keeping long fur from matting.

Moveable items must be removed for cleaning at least weekly.

Litter trays must be completely emptied, cleaned and disinfected at least once a week or more frequently as required.

Disinfectants which are toxic to cats must not be used, for example, phenol-based.

Toileting cats

Where there are multiple adult cats, there must be multiple litter trays, which must be accessible at all times. A litter of kittens must have 2 litter trays.

Faeces must be removed from the litter tray at least daily. Where there is excessive soiling it must be removed more frequently. A clean tray must be provided when cats are left overnight.

Litter trays must be placed as far away as possible from the resting and feeding areas.

Excreta must be stored away from areas where animals or food is kept.

Litter trays must be large enough to allow the cat to move around, dig and cover faeces and urine. A suitable absorbent material for litter must be provided and must be deep enough (at least 3 centimetres for adult cats) to absorb the urine and allow the cat to dig and cover.

Transporting and handling cats

All animals must be transported according to the regulations laid down in current legislation.

The licence holder must demonstrate that a suitable vehicle is available to transport the cats. It does not have to be owned by the licence holder.

Cats must always be transported (either within the cattery or to and in a vehicle) in a suitable, strong cat carrier.

Vehicles must be cleaned and disinfected after each collection or delivery of any new cats.

Cats must not be left in vehicles for unreasonable periods and must never be left unattended in a car or other vehicle where the temperature may pose a risk to the animal. Consideration must be given to whether it is necessary to transport animals when the temperature poses a risk.

Sufficient breaks must be offered for water and food where appropriate.

Cats must be transported to vet facilities in an appropriate manner for their condition ensuring that transport does not cause further suffering. Veterinary advice on the condition of the animal and suitability for transport should be sought before transport.

There must be one cat per carrier except for a litter of kittens. Kittens under 8 weeks must be transported with their mother in normal circumstances.

Required higher standards for providing a suitable environment for cats

The floor area must be at least 1.5 times larger than the minimum required.

Cats must be provided with a design and layout that provides them with choice. Separate areas for different activities should be provided. This can be achieved by, for example, including a choice of raised platforms or hiding places.

Optional higher standards for providing a suitable environment for cats

Ventilation must be a managed, fixed or portable air system to ensure appropriate temperatures are maintained in all weather. This can be an air conditioning unit or use of removable fans.

A noise management plan must be in place (for example, physical barriers, cat unit design, location of noise producing equipment) with demonstration of effectiveness.

Required higher standard for toileting cats

A privacy area for cats where they are not visible to people or cats in neighbouring pens must be provided for toileting.

6.0 Suitable diet for cats

Cats must be fed a diet appropriate to their age, breed, activity level and stage in the breeding cycle.

Kittens less than 12 weeks of age must be fed at least 4 times daily, at appropriate intervals, with more frequent intervals for hand-reared kittens.

Cats must have their own feeding and water dish. These must be separate receptacles.

Each queen must have access to food that is not accessible to the kittens.

Cats must be fed at least twice per day and in accordance with the individual cat's needs.

Food and water must be placed away from the litter tray and each other, ideally at least 60 centimetres apart.

Food bowls should be emptied and cleaned following feeding so that food, particularly wet food, is not left out until the next feeding time..

Fridges for feed storage must be provided.

Feed must be stored away from risk of vermin in cool and dry places.

Monitoring cats' diet

Food and water must be checked 4 times a day.

Weekly records of weight and body condition score must be kept to ensure health of kittens under 6 months and to allow any issues to be tracked.

Monthly records of weight and BCS must be kept to ensure the health of adult cats and to allow any issues to be tracked.

If a cat lacks appetite for 24 hours veterinary advice must be sought.

Water for cats

Fresh clean drinking water must be provided daily in a clean container and changed or refreshed as often as necessary.

There must be multiple water bowls provided to ensure all cats have ready access to water.

Required higher standards for cats' diet

Cats must have a feeding plan which splits meals into small portions throughout the day.

Where the individual cat will benefit, they must every day be given some food through scatter feeding or other appropriate feeding device. Cats must still get the majority of their daily food allowance in a feeding dish. If this is not done the reason must be documented, for example, due to veterinary advice.

7.0 Monitoring cats' behaviour and training

Enrichment for cats

All cats must have the opportunity for predatory behaviour and play specific to the needs of that cat. Kittens must have at least 4 play sessions a day.

There must be environmental enrichment in all cages such as toys, climbing frames and platforms. Toys must be easily cleaned or replaced between litters. Items must be checked daily to ensure they remain safe.

Exercise for cats

All cats must have a provision for daily exercise appropriate for breed, age, ability and physical capability.

Exercise must involve the opportunity to play and interact with people, taking care to ensure that this contact does not cause the cats, particularly kittens, stress.

Cats' behaviour

A daily socialisation and habituation programme must be documented and implemented for kittens less than 12 weeks. Kittens must have positive interactions with a variety of people. They must be gently introduced to handling, grooming, being lifted and touched all over. Kittens must be positively exposed to sights, sounds, tastes, textures and smells that they are likely later to encounter in the environment in which they are going to live.

Required higher standard for cats' enrichment

A written programme must be available setting out a variety of enrichment both inside and outside, including training, grooming, socialisation and play.

8.0 Handling and interactions with cats

Cats must be protected from over handling by staff or the public as they require time to rest. Handling of cats by the public must only take place with potential purchasers as an element of a socialisation programme.

Cats must always be handled humanely and appropriately to suit the requirements of the individual cat and to minimise stress and distress, such as anxiety, fear, frustration and pain. Cats must never be punished so that they become frightened or display agitated behaviour. Scruffing of cats (picking up a cat by the scruff of its neck) must not be done except as an absolute last resort.

Kitten handling and interactions

Litters must not be routinely mixed and if several litters are kept in one area then the pen must have solid sides to prevent direct contact or by sneezing with each different litters.

Single kittens must receive additional human interaction.

Kittens should only ever be mixed when their queens have already mixed, for example, in a domestic house. Litters from different sources must never be mixed.

Cats' interaction with people

Cats must have beneficial human contact and interaction, for example, staff on a daily basis. Interaction contact sessions with cats must each last for a minimum of 10 minutes and must occur on 3 separate, evenly spread, occasions during the day. Kittens must be visited a minimum of 4 times per day with 20 minutes of interaction per litter.

A plan must be in place to provide for additional enrichment and socialisation for any kittens that are held for longer than one month.

Required higher standard for interaction with cats

The last interaction session must take place within one hour of the end of the working day.

9.0 Protecting cats from pain, suffering injury and disease

Cats must have current vaccinations against feline parvovirus (aka feline infectious enteritis, feline panleukopenia) and against feline respiratory viruses (feline herpesvirus and feline calicivirus) when appropriate for their age.

Homoeopathic vaccination is not acceptable.

If there is evidence of external parasites the cat must be treated with a product authorised by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate. Treatment must be discussed with the vet before administration.

Optional higher standard for protecting cats from pain, injury and disease

There must be a routine monthly visit to check health and welfare by the veterinary practice and the veterinary record kept.

10.0 Emergencies

Optional higher standard condition for emergencies

A person that is competent in providing for the welfare of the animals must be on the premises at all times.

Part E – Rabbits

5.0 Suitable environment for selling rabbits

Slatted, grid or wire mesh floors must not be used in rabbit housing.

Angora Rabbits, when in full coat, may be kept on mesh floor cages for a maximum of 4 weeks. The mesh should be of a small size to allow faeces to pass through. Once they start to moult they should be clipped and returned to an enclosure with a solid floor and suitable bedding.

Environmental conditions for rabbits (including enclosure sizes)

Enclosures must be large enough for rabbits to be able to stand fully upright on their haunches without their ears touching the roof and lie fully outstretched (without touching the sides of the enclosure or another rabbit).

Where rabbits are housed on a retail premises, additional provision must be made for regular exercise. This can be provided by a programme of regular exercise outside of the housing, or housing that provides a significant permanent area in addition to the required area.

See the [minimum enclosure sizes](#) that must be followed.

Bedding and substrate for rabbits

Rabbits must be provided with a suitable nesting material in sufficient amounts. Suitable nesting materials include good quality straw or dust-free hay.

Rabbits must be provided with a suitable litter and substrates in sufficient amounts. Suitable litter materials include dust-free wood shavings, supplemented with hay.

Sawdust is not suitable as either nesting or litter materials.

Temperature for rabbits

The ambient temperature of the inside area of the sleeping accommodation should be no lower than 12°C and no higher than 26°C.

In very hot weather, cooling procedures must be in place, such as, but not limited to, fans to increase air movement, ice packs or air conditioning.

In cold temperatures, extra nesting material must be provided, unless alternative temperature control is provided, for example heating.

Enclosures must not be placed in full sun without adequate shade provision and should be protected from drafts and rain.

Light for rabbits

An example of a suitable light-dark cycle for rabbits is 12 hours light and 12 hours dark. Outdoor rabbits are subject to seasonal light variation.

Minimum enclosure sizes for rabbits

Weight of rabbit	Maximum stocking density	Minimum floor area (m ²)	Example dimensions (m) width x length	Minimum cage height (m)	Additional floor area for each additional animal (m ²)
Up to 4kg	4	0.4	1 x 0.4 or 0.8 x 0.5	0.4	0.1
4 to 6kg	2	0.4	1 x 0.4 or 0.8 x 0.5	0.5	0.2
Over 6kg	2	0.6	1 x 0.6 or 1.2 x 0.5	0.6	0.3

Minimum enclosure sizes for rabbits - higher standards

Weight of rabbit	Maximum stocking density	Minimum floor area (m ²)	Example dimensions (m) width x length	Minimum cage height (m)	Additional floor area for each additional animal (m ²)
Up to 4kg	4	0.67	1 x 0.67 or 0.8 x 0.8	0.45	0.3 (approximately 45%)
4 to 6kg	2	0.86	1 x 0.86 or 0.9 x 0.9	0.6	0.33 (approximately 38%)
Over 6kg	2	0.86	1 x 0.86 or 0.9 x 0.9	0.6	0.4 (approximately 45%)

Transporting and handling rabbits

Rabbits must be able to sit, lie down and turn around in the carrier.

Pregnant does are not to be transported within 10 days of their expected birth date unless on veterinary advice. Veterinary advice must also be sought before transporting lactating does and kittens. If nursing does and kittens are to be transported, they require additional care including adequate bedding and nesting material.

Housing and competition for rabbits

There must be sufficient cover for each rabbit housed within an enclosure and there must be two entrance or exit points to prevent monopolisation.

Required higher standards for providing a suitable environment for rabbits

Where rabbits are housed, they should have permanent access to a separate sleeping area.

See the [higher standard minimum enclosure sizes](#) for rabbits that must be followed.

Optional higher standards for providing a suitable environment for rabbits

For open top cages, rabbits that are physically able to use platforms must be provided with access to a platform or multiple platforms. For closed top cages, rabbits must be able to access these easily and be able to sit on them fully without touching the cage roof.

Care should be taken with open top enclosures to ensure sufficient height to prevent escapes or access by predators. If platforms are provided in closed top cages, rabbits must be able to access these easily and be able to sit on them fully without touching the cage roof.

Required higher standards for toileting rabbits

Litter trays must be provided that are impermeable, easy to clean and disinfect or be disposable. Litter trays must be deep cleaned at least weekly.

Required higher standards for transporting and handling rabbits

Containers must open from the top to facilitate removal of the animal. Containers must be lined with newspaper or bedding to absorb urine.

6.0 Suitable diet for rabbits

All rabbits must be fed a suitable diet primarily consisting of a constant supply of ad lib fresh hay or grass. Hay needs to be free from contamination.

A small portion of commercially available rabbit foods can be given to supplement the primary diet of hay or grass. A balanced and adequate nutrient intake should be ensured. Selective feeding should be considered and mitigated by staff. Food must be appropriate to the age and breed of the rabbit and manufacturer's feeding guidelines must be followed.

If used, leafy greens and treat foods must be given in moderation and in small amounts as appropriate to the individual rabbit.

Monitoring rabbits' diet

A vet must be consulted if there is no improvement where a rabbit has mild anorexia or reduced appetite within 12 hours of onset or the condition of the individual deteriorates.

A vet must be consulted if a rabbit shows signs of constipation or diarrhoea.

Water for rabbits

Water may be provided in a clean gravity fill drinking bottle (which must be of a suitable size for the individual), automatic drinkers, or in bowls. Bowls are not suitable if kittens are present.

Any changes to drinking receptacles must be made gradually and drinking monitored to ensure animals are drinking normally.

Required higher standards for rabbits' diet

Hay must be provided in a hay receptacle or feeder at an appropriate height, which keeps it off the floor and reduces the risk of contamination of the hay.

Foraged foods (that have been foraged in uncontaminated areas and correctly identified) must be fed to the rabbits. Commercially available dried forages including willow can also be used to supplement the diet and provide a low risk alternative to foraged foods.

Optional higher standards for rabbits' diet

Rabbits must be provided with access to growing grass to graze on, which can be in planted grass trays. Alternatively, rabbits can be provided with 2 different types of hay.

Optional higher standards for rabbits' water

Water must be provided for rabbits in multiple bottles or bowls. During hot weather, both a bottle and a bowl must be provided (unless kittens are present, in which case only bottles are suitable).

10.0 Monitoring rabbits' behaviour and training

Suitable enrichment items include, but are not limited to:

- tunnels
- paper bags filled with hay
- willow sticks
- balls
- branches from non-toxic, untreated fruit trees (for example, apple).

New objects must be introduced carefully and not exchanged daily.

Required higher standards for monitoring rabbits' behaviour and training

Dietary enrichment must be used. For example, nuggets can be scattered around the enclosure, fed in puzzle feeders or hidden in paper bags or cardboard tubes. Where puzzle feeders or dispensers are used, rabbits must be monitored to ensure they can access the food.

11.0 Handling and interactions with rabbits

Rabbits must be protected from over handling by staff or the public. Handling of rabbits by a third party must only take place with potential owners as an element of a socialisation programme.

Rabbits must not be placed on their back in positions of tonic immobility, or picked up by the scruff of their neck or ears.

Rabbits' interactions

Rabbits must be correctly sexed.

All efforts must be made to ensure rabbits are not housed singly. Where this is unavoidable, special attention must be paid to specific human interaction and they must be provided with extra enrichment. A plan must be in place for all singly housed rabbits.

Rabbits must not share housing with guinea pigs.

12.0 Protecting rabbits from pain, suffering, injury and disease

Preventing disease in rabbits

Advice that rabbits should be vaccinated against myxomatosis and rabbit haemorrhagic disease (also known as RHD 1 and 2) must be provided with sales.

Checking rabbits' health

Rabbits' front teeth and nails must be checked regularly unless inappropriate at the stage of the breeding cycle, and treated as necessary, to ensure they are not overgrown or misaligned - only a vet may correct overgrown or misaligned teeth. Rabbits must have a pre-mating check and then a check at weaning time.

Part F – Guinea pigs

5.0 Suitable environment for guinea pigs

Businesses must prevent risk of injury, illness and escape.

Slatted, grid or wire mesh floors must not be used in guinea pig housing unless placed directly on top of a grass surface under veterinary advice.

Environmental conditions, including enclosure sizes, for guinea pigs

See the [minimum enclosure sizes](#) that must be followed.

Housing needs to be of sufficient size to allow all the guinea pigs housed to be able to lie fully outstretched (without touching the sides of the enclosure or another guinea pig), run, play, tunnel and stand without touching the roof of the enclosure.

Ramps must be no steeper than 45° as guinea pigs are poor climbers.

Where guinea pigs are housed, provision must be made for regular exercise in a secure area outside of the housing.

Guinea pigs must be provided with constant access to places to hide, which may include hay piles or tunnels, in addition to their sleeping area. At a minimum each hiding place is to be large enough to allow one guinea pig to rest alone.

Bedding and substrate for guinea pigs

Guinea pigs must be provided with a suitable nesting material in sufficient amounts. Suitable nesting materials include, but are not limited to, good quality dust-free hay or shredded paper.

Guinea pigs must be provided with a suitable litter in sufficient amounts. Suitable litter materials include dust-free wood shavings, supplemented with hay.

Sawdust is not suitable as either nesting or litter materials.

Temperature for guinea pigs

The ambient temperature of the inside area of the sleeping accommodation should be no lower than 12°C and no higher than 26°C.

In very hot weather, cooling procedures must be in place, such as, but not limited to, fans to increase air movement, ice packs or air conditioning.

In cold temperatures, extra nesting material must be provided, unless alternative temperature control is provided, for example, heating.

Enclosures must not be placed in full sun without adequate shade provision and should be protected from drafts and rain.

Minimum enclosure sizes for guinea pigs

Type	Stocking density	Minimum floor area (m ²)	Example dimensions (m) width x length	Minimum cage height (m)	Additional floor area for each additional animal (m ²)
Guinea pig	1 to 4	0.23	1 x 0.23 or 0.52 x 0.52	0.3	0.09 (approximately 33%)

Minimum enclosure sizes for guinea pigs - higher standards

Type	Maximum stocking density	Minimum floor area (m ²)	Example dimensions (m) width x length	Minimum cage height (m)	Additional floor area for each additional animal (m ²)
Guinea pig	2	0.23	1 x 0.23 or 0.52 x 0.52	0.45	0.09 (approximately 33%)

Transporting and handling guinea pigs

Guinea pigs are only to be transported in suitable carriers and must not be mixed with unfamiliar animals in the same carrier. The carrier must be of an appropriate size so that it is not overcrowded.

Housing and competition of guinea pigs

There must be sufficient cover for each guinea pig housed within an enclosure and there must be 2 entrance or exit points to prevent monopolisation.

Required higher standards for providing a suitable environment for guinea pigs

Where guinea pigs are housed, they must have permanent attached access to a secure pen.

See the [minimum enclosure sizes](#) that must be followed.

Required higher standards for transporting and handling guinea pigs

Carriers must open from the top to facilitate removal of the animal. Carriers must be lined with newspaper or bedding to absorb urine

6.0 Suitable diet for guinea pigs

All guinea pigs must be fed a suitable diet primarily consisting of a constant supply of ad lib fresh hay. Hay needs to be free from contamination.

Guinea pigs must have sufficient vitamin C in their diet as they are unable to synthesise this specific vitamin. Therefore, a portion of specific guinea pig food must be given daily or alternatively, a stabilised vitamin C commercially available supplement can be provided.

Care must be taken in product selection and suitability and if in doubt the vet must be consulted.

Guinea pigs can also be given a portion of washed leafy green vegetables daily.

Commercially available guinea pig foods can be given to supplement the primary diet of hay. A balanced and adequate nutrient intake should be ensured. Selective feeding should be considered and mitigated by staff. Food must be appropriate to the age and breed of the guinea pig and manufacturer's feeding guidelines must be followed.

Water may be provided in a clean gravity fill drinking bottle (which must be of a suitable size for the individual), automatic drinkers, or in bowls.

Any changes to drinking receptacles must be made gradually and drinking monitored to ensure animals are drinking normally.

Monitoring guinea pig diet

A vet must be consulted if there is no improvement where a guinea pig has mild anorexia or reduced appetite within 12 hours of onset or the condition of the individual deteriorates.

A vet must be consulted promptly if guinea pigs show signs of ill health.

Required higher standards for guinea pigs' diet

Forage foods (that have been collected in uncontaminated areas and correctly identified) must be fed to the guinea pigs. Commercially available dried forages including willow can also be used to supplement the diet and provide a low risk alternative to foraged foods.

Optional higher standards for guinea pigs' diet

Guinea pigs must be provided with access to growing grass to graze on. This can be achieved by placing planted grass trays in their exercise areas. There must be enough grass for all guinea pigs housed to graze simultaneously. Alternatively, guinea pigs can be provided with fresh vegetables high in vitamin C every day.

7.0 Monitoring of behaviour and training of guinea pigs

Suitable enrichment items include, but are not limited to, tunnels, paper bags filled with hay, willow sticks and balls, and branches from non-toxic untreated fruit trees (such as apple).

Required higher standards for monitoring guinea pigs' behaviour and training

Dietary enrichment must be used. For example, nuggets can be scattered around the enclosure, fed in puzzle feeders or hidden in paper bags or cardboard tubes. Where puzzle feeders or dispensers are used, guinea pigs must be monitored to ensure they can access the food.

8.0 Handling and interactions with guinea pigs

Guinea pigs are not to be placed on their back in positions of tonic immobility, nor must they be picked up by the scruff of their neck. Two hands must be used to support larger or adult guinea pigs.

Interactions with guinea pigs

Guinea pigs must be housed in single sex groups unless sold or used for breeding.

Guinea pigs and rabbits must not share the same housing.

Required higher standards for interactions with guinea pigs

Where guinea pigs have to be housed singly they must be provided with extra sources of enrichment. A plan must be in place for singly housed guinea pigs.

9.0 Protecting guinea pigs from pain, suffering, injury and disease

Guinea pigs front teeth and nails must be checked regularly, unless inappropriate at the stage of the breeding cycle, and treated as necessary, to ensure they are not overgrown or misaligned - only a vet may correct overgrown or misaligned teeth. Guinea pigs in breeding harems must be checked as appropriate based on the management system.

Part G – Ferrets

5.0 Suitable environment

Businesses must prevent risk of injury, illness and escape.

Slatted, grid or wire mesh floors must not be used in ferret housing.

Environmental conditions for ferrets (including enclosure sizes)

See the [minimum enclosure sizes](#) that must be followed.

Housing needs to be of sufficient size to allow all the ferrets housed to be able to lie fully outstretched in any direction, run, forage, explore or play, as well as to stand fully upright without touching the roof of the enclosure.

Ferrets must be provided with constant access to places to hide. As a minimum, each hiding place must be large enough to allow one ferret to rest alone.

Bedding and substrate for ferrets

Sleeping areas need to be dry, draught-free, well ventilated and clean as well as large enough to allow all the ferrets housed to rest together fully outstretched, turn around unimpeded and move around comfortably. Appropriate bedding materials include good quality dust-free hay or shredded paper, or fabric items that can be laundered (although these must be monitored for chewing or damage and removed and replaced as necessary).

Ferrets must be provided with a suitable substrate in sufficient amounts to allow foraging and other behaviours. Suitable litter materials include dust-free wood shavings, supplemented with dust-free hay.

Sawdust and sand are not suitable as either nesting or litter materials.

Temperature for ferrets

Ambient temperature should be no lower than 12°C and no higher than 26°C.

In very hot weather, cooling procedures must be in place such as (but not limited to):

- fans to increase air movement
- ice packs
- air conditioning

In cold temperatures extra nesting material must be provided, unless alternative temperature control is provided (such as heating).

Light for ferrets

Ferrets need to experience appropriate light: dark cycles (minimum of 8 hours light and 16 hours dark; this is not to exceed 16 hours light and 8 hours dark).

Minimum enclosure sizes for ferrets

Type	Maximum stocking density	Minimum floor area (m ²)	Dimensions (m) width x length	Minimum dimension (m)	Minimum cage height (m)	Additional floor area for each additional animal (m ²)
Ferret under 12 weeks	1 to 4	1	1 x 1 or 1.66 x 0.6	0.6	0.6	0.25 (approximately 25%)
Ferret older than 12 weeks	1	0.6	1 x 0.6 or 0.77 x 0.77	0.6	0.6	0.6

Toileting for ferrets

Ferrets require space for their toilet area removed from their sleeping or eating areas. Litter trays can be placed in this area to assist with cleaning.

Housing and competition of ferrets

There must be at least one hiding place for each ferret housed within an enclosure and there must be 2 entrance or exit points to prevent monopolisation.

Required higher standards for providing a suitable environment for ferrets

Carriers must open from the top to facilitate removal of the animal, cardboard carriers are not advised as they are easily chewed and can become damp. Carriers can be lined with newspaper and some bedding material, for example, good quality dust-free hay or shredded paper can be provided for comfort.

6.0 Suitable diet for ferrets

All ferrets must be fed a suitable, complete ferret diet, provided at appropriate intervals.

Ferrets must not be fed dog or cat food, as these contain cereal and plant proteins which ferrets are unable to digest. For the same reason, bread or cereals must also not be given to ferrets.

Ferrets mustn't be given anything that contains small bones, excluding day old chicks.

Monitoring ferrets' diet

A vet must be consulted if there is no improvement in poor intake or anorexia within 24 hours of onset or if the condition of the individuals deteriorates.

Water for ferrets

Where water is supplied in bowls they must be heavy based.

Optional higher standards for ferrets' diet

Treat foods must include cooked meat scraps and hard boiled eggs. Treats can be given in moderation and as appropriate to the individual ferret.

7.0 Monitoring ferrets' behaviour and training

Enrichment for ferrets

There must be environmental enrichment in all enclosures.

Ferrets must not be given enrichment made of rubber, due to the risk of ingestion leading to intestinal blockages if chewed and swallowed.

Exercise for ferrets

Ferrets need access to an area in which to exercise.

Required higher standard for monitoring ferrets' behaviour and training

Dietary enrichment must be used. For example, nuggets can be scattered around the enclosure, fed in puzzle feeders or hidden in paper bags or cardboard tubes. Where puzzle feeders or dispensers are used, ferrets must be monitored to ensure they can access the food.

8.0 Handling and interactions with ferrets

Ferrets must not be lifted using only one hand.

Interactions with ferrets

Ferrets must be housed in single-sex groups or pairs, ideally comprising of littermates or individuals introduced as juveniles.

Being induced ovulators, adult jills must be prevented from remaining in season to mitigate oestrogen related diseases. Veterinary advice must be sought about reproductive management. This must be documented and the reproductive issues explained to prospective purchasers.

Required higher standards for interactions with ferrets

Where ferrets have to be housed singly, they must be provided with extra sources of enrichment. A plan must be in place for all singly housed ferrets.

9.0 Protecting ferrets from pain, suffering, injury and disease

Preventative treatment for ferrets

The purchaser must be advised that ferrets should be vaccinated against canine distemper, usually at 6 to 8 weeks of age and again at 10 to 12 weeks old, thereafter annually but as per manufacturer's recommendations.

Checking ferrets

Ferrets nails must be checked regularly to ensure they do not become overgrown.

Part H – Domestic small rodents

Domestic small rodents means hamsters, gerbils, rats, mice, chinchillas, degus.

5.0 Suitable environment for domestic small rodents

Businesses must prevent the risk of injury, illness and escape.

If wire cages are used, bars must be narrow enough to avoid the risk of escape.

Slatted, grid or wire mesh floors are not to be used in small animal housing. Chinchillas can be housed in cages with wire mesh floors if there are areas of alternative flooring such as solid wood.

See the [minimum enclosure sizes](#) that must be followed.

Environmental conditions, including enclosure sizes for small rodents

Every animal must be able to lie fully outstretched, turn around unimpeded, stand fully upright without touching the cage roof, hide, dig, run and play.

Sleeping areas need to be dry, draught-free, well ventilated and clean as well as large enough to allow all the small rodents housed to rest together fully outstretched, turn around unimpeded and move around comfortably.

Bedding and substrate for small rodents

Small rodents must be provided with suitable nesting material in sufficient amounts. The type used will depend on the animal kept. Small rodents must not be given nesting materials which can separate into thin strands, for example, cotton wool.

Suitable nesting materials for small rodents include, but are not limited to:

- hamsters - hay, wood wool, shredded paper or cardboard
- rats and mice - hay, shredded paper, paper strips and paper tissues
- gerbils - ink-free cardboard (for example, empty toilet rolls, egg boxes, plain cardboard boxes) or paper and hay
- chinchillas and degus must be provided with constant access to a nest box filled with hay

Any hay, nesting materials and substrates provided must be good quality and dust-free.

Small rodents must be provided with a suitable litter and substrate in sufficient amounts. There are a number of different litters available and the type will depend on the animal kept. Suitable materials include but are not limited to:

- hamsters - dust-free wood shavings or granulated corn-cob
- rats and mice - non-aspen woodchips, cellulose based chips or shredded paper
- gerbils - peat-free compost or rough-grained woodchip or hay mix
- chinchillas - shredded paper, dust-free wood shavings and hay
- degus - dust-free wood shavings and hay

Small rodents must be provided with constant access to places to hide, in addition to their sleeping area. As a minimum each hiding place needs to be large enough to allow one individual to rest alone.

Temperature for small domestic rodents

Temperatures must be appropriate to species specific or life stage consideration. In general ambient temperatures must not go below 12°C or exceed 26°C. This may be provided with nesting material.

High temperatures above 18°C can be detrimental to chinchillas and extra checks and precautions must be made on these in very hot weather.

Providing sufficient nesting material can help achieve these temperatures.

Minimum enclosure sizes for small rodents

Type of animals	Area in cm^2 for 1 to 4 animals	Area in cm^2 for 5 animals	Area in cm^2 for 6 animals	Area in cm^2 for 7 animals	Area in cm^2 for 8 animals	Area in cm^2 for 9 animals	Area in cm^2 for 10 animals	Minimum cage height (cm)	Minimum cage depth (cm)
Gerbils	680	790	900	1,000	1,113	1,240	1,350	30	25
Rats	1,350	1,570	1,800	2,020	2,225	2,470	2,700	30	28
Degus	2,250	2,630	3,000	3,380	3,750	4,130	4,500	30	30
Chinchillas	2,500	3,750	5,000	6,250	7,500	8750	10,000	45	45

Minimum enclosure sizes for small rodents - higher standards

Type of animal	Area in cm ² for 1 to 4 animals	Area in cm ² for 5 animals	Area in cm ² for 6 animals	Area in cm ² for 7 animals	Area in cm ² for 8 animals	Area in cm ² for 9 animals	Area in cm ² for 10 animals	Minimum cage height (cm)	Minimum cage depth (cm)
Dwarf hamsters, mice	750	1,000	1,250	1,500	1,750	2,000	2,250	25	25
Syrian hamster (1 only)*	750	Not applicable	25	25					
Rats	1,800	2,400	3,000	3,600	4,200	4,800	5,400	30	28
Gerbil	1,250	1,250	1,500	1,750	2,000	2,250	2,500	30	25
Degus (2) to a maximum of 6 animals	2,500	6,250	7,500	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	45	45
Chinchillas (2)	2,500	6,250	7,500	8,750	10,000	11,250	12,500	45	45
Chinchillas (3 to 4)	5,000	Not applicable							

*Syrian hamsters under 12 weeks old are allowed to have the same enclosure size as dwarf hamsters. Once sexually mature, a Syrian hamster must be kept individually.

Handling and transport of small domestic rodents

Small rodents must be transported in suitable carriers and must not be mixed with unfamiliar animals (in the same carrier). They must be transported with their companion small rodents, where applicable, and the carrier is to be of an appropriate size so that it is not overcrowded.

Required higher standards for providing a suitable environment for small rodents

See the [minimum enclosure sizes](#) that must be followed.

Light-reducing shelters for rats, mice and hamsters (such as, but not limited to, a box or red tinted acrylic) must be provided. However, these must be monitored daily for signs of chewing and removed or replaced as necessary.

Small rodents must be provided with a choice of different nesting materials.

Required higher standards for cleaning small rodents' environment

After cleaning, some used unsoiled litter and nesting material must be transferred back to help keep scents familiar for the rodents.

Optional higher standards for providing a suitable environment for small rodents

Small rodents that are physically able to use platforms must be provided with access to a platform (singly housed) or multiple platforms. Animals must be able to access these easily and be able to sit (ideally stand) up on it fully without touching the cage roof.

Optional higher standard for small rodents' light

When work is occurring near, or nocturnal animals are checked at night, dim red light or dim white light must be used to minimise disturbance. Light level must be sufficient enough for observing or undertaking required tasks.

6.0 Suitable diet for small domestic rodents

All small rodents must be fed a suitable diet that is available to them at all times.

Chinchillas and degus must have constant access to good quality dust-free hay.

All small rodents must be fully weaned on admission.

Monitoring small rodents' diet

If there is no improvement in poor intake or not eating within 12 hours or the condition of the individual deteriorates, a vet must be consulted.

A vet must be consulted promptly if a small mammal shows signs of ill health.

Water for small domestic rodents

Water must be provided in a bottle or automatic water systems and located away from the sleeping area to help prevent this becoming damp or waterlogged if the bottle leaks.

7.0 Monitoring small domestic rodents' behaviour and training

Enrichment for small domestic rodents

Suitable enrichment items include, but are not limited to, tunnels, paper bags filled with hay, willow sticks or balls and branches from non-toxic, untreated fruit trees (for example, apple). Opportunities for gnawing should always be available.

Chinchillas and Degus must be given the opportunity to use a sand bath by offering one on a regular basis, for example 10 minutes daily. This should not be permanently available.

Small mammals must not be given enrichment made of rubber, due to the risk of ingestion leading to intestinal blockages if chewed and swallowed.

8.0 Animal handling and interactions with small domestic rodents

Small rodents must not be picked up by the scruff of their necks, ears or unsupported by the tail, nor must they be placed on their backs in positions of tonic immobility. Picking small mammals up unsupported by the tail can result in their tail breaking or the skin sloughing off (degloving). Additionally, if chinchillas are handled roughly they may shed some of their fur.

Interactions with small domestic rodents

All small rodents must be housed in single sex groups unless a solitary species (or sold or used for breeding).

Small rodents must only be housed with other rodents of the same species.

Required higher standards for handling and interactions with small domestic rodents

Where social species of small rodents have to be housed singly they must be provided with extra sources of enrichment. A plan must be in place for singly housed small rodents (only those of a social species).

9.0 Protecting small domestic rodents from pain, suffering, injury and disease

The front teeth and nails of every small rodent must be checked monthly, unless inappropriate at the stage of the breeding cycle, to ensure they are not overgrown or misaligned - only a vet may correct overgrown or misaligned teeth. They should have a pre-mating check and then a check at weaning time.

Part I – Other non-domestic species (mammals)

Other non-domestic species (mammals) includes any other mammal that is offered for sale excluding those already listed in this document or is any mammal not normally domesticated in Great Britain.

3.0 Use, number and type of non-domestic mammal

Staff must have demonstrable knowledge of the species or a closely related species.

Staff must comply with UK legislation with regard to the selling or procurement of invasive alien species.

4.0 Staffing to sell other non-domestic mammals

Other non-domesticated species' covers a wide range of species seen in general trade. When approaching a novel species, it must be ensured that the same welfare requirements are met as for other species.

Note that courses and qualifications relevant to pet vending may not cover the care of other non-domesticated species, particularly those that are less commonly traded.

Primary sources of information and guidance on appropriate standards of care include, where they are available, government-issued Codes of Practice, husbandry guidelines from the zoo industry, guidance notes for related Dangerous Wild Animals Act Schedule listed species or other peer reviewed, industry or competent non-governmental organisation produced guidance materials.

Inspectors unfamiliar with individual novel species are strongly advised to seek appropriate competent advice, for instance zoo licence inspectors, experienced private keepers or breeders or appropriately qualified individuals, including vets listed on the British Veterinary Zoological Society (BVZS) website.

Where specialist advice is required it is recommended that copies of training and husbandry documents are retained and secondary opinions sought.

5.0 Suitable environment for non-domestic mammals

Licence holders must ensure that animals are maintained to a minimum standard as outlined in [zoo standards](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/secretary-of-state-s-standards-of-modern-zoo-practice) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/secretary-of-state-s-standards-of-modern-zoo-practice>).

Where these do not exist, standards for similar or related species must be considered as to their appropriateness and standards extrapolated.

Licence holders must ensure that animals sold as part of a licenced activity are maintained to a minimum welfare standard. The zoo standards or non-statutory industry agreed welfare standards must be considered in the inspector's judgement of the animal's welfare. The inspector must always consider whether an animal is appropriate for sale to the public.

If welfare standards do not exist for an animal, standards for similar or related species must be considered. The licence holder must make sure that the welfare needs of the animal is being met as set out in the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

6.0 Monitoring non-domestic mammals' behaviour and training

In many cases, handling is not in the animal's best interests and in such cases must be kept to a minimum.

Optional higher standard for monitoring other non-domestic mammals

A written programme must be available setting out a variety of appropriate enrichment provided.

Part J – Birds

3.0 Use, number and type of birds

Staff must have demonstrable knowledge of the species or of a closely related species.

Any doubt or dispute regarding the husbandry of species not specifically detailed below must be referred to an individual with suitable experience of husbandry such as an exotics vet or related professional.

5.0 Suitable environment for birds

Care must be taken where aviaries or cages are constructed of newly galvanised mesh to prevent heavy metal poisoning, particularly in psittacine birds which will often chew the metal. The licence holder must be able to demonstrate the steps taken to minimise or prevent any poisoning.

Cages or aviaries should be constructed from materials most suited for the species housed and that are easy to clean and disinfect.

Environmental conditions for birds (including enclosure sizes)

All immature arboreal birds, at the point of fledging and for several following weeks, require larger cage sizes to stimulate flight.

Where a bird uses a cage for sleeping, and the vast majority of the day is spent outside of the cage in a flight aviary where it is given the option to fly, then the cage must be a minimum of one and a half times the bird's flying wingspan for each of the length, depth and height of the cage.

For birds housed singly that spend the majority of their time in a cage, the cage width must be a minimum of twice flying wingspan, and the depth and height a minimum of one and a half times the birds flying wingspan. A pair of birds must have enough space to fly past each other with the depth being increased to a minimum of 2x flying wingspan.

In multiple occupancy cages for every additional bird over 2 birds the cage dimensions must be increased by a set percentage per additional bird (either length or width or split between the 2 dimensions) of the individual's flying wingspan for that species as outlined in the [avian enclosure size increases for multiple occupancy](#) table. Larger sizes are preferred and recommended. See [minimum enclosure sizes](#) for birds for examples.

In the case where the flying wingspan is unknown a rough estimate of 2 to 3 times the length of the bird (bill-tip to tip of longest tail feather) can be used as a guide for flying wingspan.

Where non-flying birds are maintained, enclosure dimensions must reflect current best practice for the individual species.

Birds that are ordinarily confined to smaller enclosures for the specific purpose of egg-laying or rearing of chicks (particularly chickens and pigeons) are exempted from the cage size dimensions referenced. However, the time kept in these enclosures should be minimised and should not, in any case, exceed 5 months in any one 12 month cycle. Businesses must also provide outcome based evidence to demonstrate that the welfare of the birds is being met with reference to guidance in the rest of this document, and ensure that they are complying with the legal requirements laid down in other relevant legislation.

Where appropriate for the species outdoor aviaries must include sufficient sheltered and non-sheltered space. Shelter must be sufficient to allow all the birds to be undercover at the same time and preferably a third of a typical aviary should be covered with wind and rain-proof materials.

Where a separate flight aviary is available, the licence holder must be able to demonstrate the frequency with which the birds have access to this larger aviary to the inspector. This must be a demonstrable minimum of 6 hours in a 24 hour period on a daily basis.

The mesh hole size must be small enough that birds housed within cannot put their head or wing through it. The mesh gauge must be stout enough that the birds cannot break or bend it.

As appropriate to species, birds must be given access to water for bathing and preening to encourage feather health.

Birds must not be exposed to toxic or cooking fumes in the areas where they are maintained as these can be toxic to the birds (for example, Teflon poisoning). Aviaries or cages must not be located next to kitchens or bathrooms.

Aviaries should have a covered roof of netting with a mesh size small enough that birds housed within cannot put their head or wings through it or be of solid construction due to the presence of avian influenza in migratory waterfowl.

Bedding and substrate for birds

There must be adequate perching space for all birds at the same time. Perches must be positioned to encourage activity, preferably flight, and so that birds do not defecate on each other or into food receptacles.

Perching must be varied and non-abrasive to prevent bumblefoot.

Suitable substrate should be provided for ground dwelling birds that scratch and forage.

Temperature for birds

Ambient temperature must be appropriate for the species. Extremes of temperature must be avoided.

Light for birds

Lighting levels must approximate those of daylight with regard to intensity and colour.

Species requiring UVB (ultraviolet B) lighting must have appropriate UVB emitting lamps manufactured for use with birds. These must be replaced according to manufacturer's recommendations, and effective provision must be monitored through the use of a UV (ultraviolet) meter. Evidence to this effect must be demonstrable to inspectors.

Minimum enclosure sizes for birds

Species	Length of bird (head to tip of tail, cm)	Average length of flying wingspan (cm)	Minimum cage dimensions to allow flight (single birds only, cm). Length: 2x wingspan, depth and height: 1.5x wingspan, length x depth x height)	Examples for % enclosure size increase for each additional bird when they are already 2 or more birds in the enclosure
Psittacines				

Species	Length of bird (head to tip of tail, cm)	Average length of flying wingspan (cm)	Minimum cage dimensions to allow flight (single birds only, cm). Length: 2x wingspan, depth and height: 1.5x wingspan, length x depth x height)	Examples for % enclosure size increase for each additional bird when they are already 2 or more birds in the enclosure
Budgerigar	18	30	60 x 45 x 45	5
Cockatiel	30	48	96 x 72 x 72	10
Love bird	15	28	56 x 42 x 42	10
Small parakeets and conures	20	35	70 x 52.5 x 52.5	10
Large parakeets, conures and small macaws	34	70	140 x 105 x 105	20
Amazon parrots	30	60	120 x 90 x 90	20
African grey (including Timneh)	34	70	140 x 105 x 105	20
Cockatoo (small to medium)	35	75	150 x 112.5 x 112.5	20
Large cockatoos and macaws	85	110	220 x 165 x 165	20
Cage and aviary birds				
Canary	10 to 12	22	44 x 33 x 33	5
Zebra finch	10 to 12	22	44 x 33 x 33	5
Pigeon	35	70	140 x 105 x 105	10
Turaco	40 to 50	50	100 x 75 x 75	20

For multi-occupancy cages, the dimensions must be a minimum of 2 flying wingspans for length, height and depth, with stocking allowing all birds access to resources, particularly perching.

Avian enclosure size increases for multiple occupancy

Individual Bird Weight Range (g)	Increase of length or width (%)	Example species
Less than 50	5	Budgies, Canaries, Zebra finches and other small finches
50 to 100	10	Cockatiel, lovebirds, small parakeets or conures and pigeons

Individual Bird Weight Range (g)	Increase of length or width (%)	Example species
More than 100	20	Larger species (such as macaws, medium or large parrots)

Additional increase per number of birds over 2 birds. For example, 3 birds that weigh less than 50 grams equals a 5% increase, for every additional bird the increase will be an additional 5%.

Cleaning birds

Faeces and urates must be removed at least once a week, but more frequently as required. For species which are in poor health or should not be disturbed during breeding seasons, cleaning should be minimized, provided that appropriately hygienic living conditions are maintained.

Containers for food and water should not be placed below perches, where they can be contaminated by birds' droppings.

Flooring must be drop-through or easily cleaned, with consideration of selection of substrate type and minimal disturbance for ground dwelling birds.

Required higher standards for providing a suitable environment for birds

The enclosure size must allow the bird to have variety and choice in its environment.

Birds must be displayed for sale in aviaries that are 4 times the bird's flying wingspan or larger in size for length, depth and height for an individual bird and 20% increase for each successive bird for multiple occupancy.

A variety of substrates, including a variety of perches for arboreal birds must be provided. Perches of a variable thickness and materials must be provided.

Output of UUVB bulbs must be monitored with a UV meter and recorded. Species specific requirements must be documented and available for inspection.

Optional higher standard for providing a suitable environment for birds

All cages must have direct access to a flight aviary.

6.0 Suitable diet for birds

Birds that require it must have a constant ad lib supply of food.

Food supplements must be provided as appropriate to the species concerned.

Specialist feeding practices must be taken into consideration in aviary design, such as access for breeding aviaries or flycatcher manure piles. At times these may be in perceived conflict with expectations for hygiene and where in doubt specialist advice must be sought. Licence holders must be able to demonstrate the rationale behind any specialist feeding practices being utilised.

Required higher standard for birds' diet

Specialist nutritional advice must be sought where appropriate.

7.0 Monitoring birds' behaviour and training

Enrichment

Enclosures must be designed, furnished and of a size which allows inhabitants to exhibit a range of natural behaviours, including flying, climbing and hiding.

Psittaciformes, and other species as appropriate, must be provided with suitable toys which encourage them to play and to 'forage' for foods.

Cages and aviaries must have at least one side (one of its horizontal dimensions) clad in an opaque material, so that the occupants are not vulnerable on all sides to viewing and disturbance.

Birds of prey subject to restraint by tethering for part of their lives must be flown at least 4 times a week unless tethered under veterinary advice for medical treatment. Licence holders must not permanently tether any bird. All birds must be given the opportunity to fly or move around freely during part of the year, for example in an aviary (free lofted) for rest periods from sale,

demonstrations, breeding or moulting. The recommended period is a minimum of one month in a 12 month period but daily or overnight is preferred.

Habituation of birds

Handling must be kept to a minimum at all times except where the licence holder can demonstrate that it is for a reason that is in the best interest of the animal, for example to check the birds' health checking, flying birds of prey.

Required higher standards for monitoring birds' behaviour

Birds must not be housed or sold with their wings clipped. Wings are kept complete and flight is actively encouraged.

All birds of prey, or other trained birds where appropriate, must have daily periods of flight; either in aviaries or flown outdoors by a competent person.

Optional higher standard for monitoring birds' behaviour

Furniture must be changed on a regular basis to provide novelty and enclosures designed to provide choice for the animals within.

8.0 Handling and interactions with birds

Social species must be kept in social groups suitable to the species. Where this is not possible, special attention must be paid to specific human interaction and they must be provided with extra enrichment. A plan must be in place for all singly housed birds.

Decisions to pair or group-house social bird species must be made by suitably trained and competent staff.

Compatible species-specific sex ratios and suitable group sizes must be observed bearing in mind potential for persistent aggression.

Only compatible species must be kept communally.

In particular, consideration for management of psittacine species, known to be sociable and live in flock situations, must be shown in the housing arrangements and stocking densities.

All immature birds must be housed with, or housed in close proximity to, others of their own or similar species, using adjacent cages or aviaries where they are in visual contact.

Where behavioural problems are likely to arise in 'adult' non-colonial birds, consideration must be given to managing them separately with the same species adjacent in visual contact. Examples of species that breed in a group include budgerigars and cockatiels, non-colonial breeders include African greys, Amazons and cockatoos. Once non-colonially nesting species approach breeding age, keeping 2 or more in a cage can be dangerous, as paired birds of breeding age can be aggressive to each other and their own mate.

Required higher standards for handling and interactions with birds

Birds must not be removed from their parents (for 'hand rearing') until their eyes have been opened for more than one week to avoid risk of mal imprinting on humans as adult birds.

Adult non-colonial birds must be managed in large flights, to allow birds space to escape from each other if required to prevent behavioural problems. Sufficient staff to manage the population must be provided as needed.

Optional higher standard for handling and interactions with birds

The licence holder must have signage identifying potentially aggressive birds including clearly labelled aviaries and cages.

Part K – Reptiles and amphibians

3.0 Use, number and type of animal

Staff must have demonstrable knowledge of the species or a closely related species.

5.0 Suitable environment for reptiles and amphibians

Protecting reptiles and amphibians from injury, illness or escape

Vivaria must allow for ease of cleaning and the maintenance of hygienic standards. This includes the use of waterproof materials for construction.

Venomous animals must be kept in appropriate, secure enclosures (with suitable means of escape-proof ventilation).

Service areas for venomous species must be secure. Service areas must be free of escape routes or places to hide, for example access into cavity walls.

Enclosures containing venomous species must be individually marked with warning signs identifying the species and number of animals.

Venomous animal enclosures must be kept locked and access available only by authorised persons.

Environmental conditions (including enclosure sizes for reptiles and amphibians)

See the [minimum enclosure sizes](#) that must be followed.

The size of the vivarium must allow a demonstrable and species-appropriate thermogradient to be maintained.

All vivaria must be provided with hides or species appropriate areas of shelter.

The vivarium must be large enough to allow the animals separate types of activity including:

- resting
- thermo-regulating
- feeding
- hiding
- swimming (if applicable)

Only compatible species of similar size and from similar habitat and geographical areas must be kept communally.

Cannibalistic species should not be kept communally.

Predator and prey species should not be kept in sight of each other. Where possible, they should be in different areas to minimise stress due to smell or noise.

Aggressive individuals such as breeding males should be kept singly, or in conditions to suppress aggression.

Generally, mixing of species requiring different environmental conditions is not recommended. Although paludaria (vivaria with terrestrial and aquatic areas) which combine fish with small reptiles or amphibians of appropriate species are acceptable.

Reptiles and amphibians may be housed individually or in small groups of the same or compatible species.

Aquatic species must be able to swim (or submerge) adequately and should have a water depth suitable for the species and life stage.

To prevent trauma, materials with rough surfaces (such as metal mesh) must be used with caution in the construction of vivaria, unless there are species-specific requirements that indicate their use (for example, those requiring high ventilation rates). Where possible, plastic or other suitable alternative materials are preferred.

For reptile species or life stages where evidence suggests that smaller spaces are required for feeding or security, the animal must be maintained in the size-appropriate vivarium (as defined below). This is with the addition of a number of small hides, ensuring the animal has the choice to move out into the wider vivarium at any time and enable appropriate thermoregulation whilst ensuring the reptile feels secure. Where there are documented problems with feeding individual reptiles in larger spaces they may be maintained in smaller enclosures.

Bedding and substrate for reptiles and amphibians

Substrate may include, but not be limited to:

- paper towel
- bark chip
- wood chip
- terrarium humus
- moss
- gravel
- terrarium sand

Suitable substrate must be chosen depending on the species.

Burrowing species must have an appropriate substrate to facilitate burrowing.

Measures must be taken to minimise ingestion of substrate.

A moisture gradient is recommended for many amphibians. In setups which are misted on a regular basis to keep humidity levels elevated, it is important that a drainage layer is provided in the enclosure to avoid the substrate from becoming waterlogged. Drainage must be considered in all setups where there is a risk of waterlogging.

Temperature for reptiles and amphibians

Licence holders must be able to demonstrate that enclosures provide an appropriate thermogradient (the temperature range from the cool end to the hot end of the vivaria) for each species.

Temperature must be monitored using a reliable and repeatable method. Licence holders must be able to demonstrate systems are in place to allow assessment of the range of temperatures an animal experiences over a 24 hour period, this can be done using a maximum and minimum thermometer, for example.

Temperature must be checked daily on initial setup of a vivarium. Once the temperatures are stable, where thermostatically controlled heat sources are used, assessment can be reduced to once per week. Alternatively, an automatic system can be used that monitors temperatures and warns if parameters are outside of an acceptable range.

Records should be kept of instances where parameters fall outside of the appropriate range and what corrective actions were taken. There is no requirement to record ongoing conditions that fall within the appropriate range.

Appropriate temperatures for each species that is in stock or commonly stocked by the licence holder must be documented in written procedures.

At a minimum, the written procedures must document:

- ambient day temperature range
- minimum ambient night temperature
- basking zone temperature (where appropriate)
- UV requirements (where appropriate)

Where clearly defined ambient and basking temperatures are not available for a species, comparable species from a similar geographical habitat can be used to define the range. For such species where there are no known care guidelines and specialist husbandry is required, these species must only be sold to competent specialist keepers.

Any deviations from the expected temperature range must be recorded along with the action taken to ensure the appropriate temperature is provided for the animal.

Heating equipment must be controlled with the use of thermostats where compatible, and the vivaria sited so as to prevent overheating.

Where rack systems or other vivaria are utilised in thermally stable heated rooms, temperature monitoring of one tray per level is acceptable. It must be accompanied by spot checks that demonstrate that the recorded temperatures are representative of the other rack systems in the shared space, and that temperatures are maintained at the correct ranges for the species housed within. During inspection, licence holders must be able to demonstrate that this is the case.

Ambient and basking temperatures must be appropriate to the species concerned.

Licence holders and staff must have access to relevant credible reference material for normal environmental parameters.

Basking zones may be provided by radiant heat sources (such as a light bulb or heat mat), as appropriate to the species.

Heat sources for both terrestrial and aquatic species must be guarded or positioned, so no animal living in the enclosure can make direct contact with the heating element. This includes heat-emitting light sources but excludes heat mats and hot rocks or similar such heating devices.

Hides or shelters must be provided in different areas across the thermogradient.

Water quality for reptiles and amphibians

Aquatic amphibians must have water quality measurement similar to that for fish, with species specific requirements being met.

Water for aquatic species of amphibians must be dechlorinated. Methods include harvested rain water (where appropriate) or using commercial dechlorinating products.

Containers must be thoroughly washed between each use.

For semi-aquatic and aquatic reptilian species (such as terrapins, turtles, and crocodilians) and species where water features form a part of the enclosure design, water must be maintained in a clean hygienic state.

Where appropriate, terrapins must also have an adequate land basking area suitable for the species.

Light for reptiles and amphibians

Species requiring UVB lighting must have appropriate UVB emitting lamps manufactured for use with reptiles and amphibians. Replacement equipment, parts or bulbs must be fitted according to manufacturer's recommendations. On installation of a new lamp, a UV meter (preferably a UVI meter) must be used to ensure adequate and appropriate UVB levels are provided at the level the animal is located. Evidence of the frequency of lamp changes and assessment of UVB output on installation must be demonstrable to inspectors.

UV light sources must not be screened by non-UV transmitting glass, mesh or plastic such that the animals do not receive the appropriate UVB levels. Animals must have areas of shade so that they can escape from the light if desired.

Minimum enclosure sizes for reptiles and amphibians

The snout-to-vent length (SVL) is the distance from the nose to the cloaca.

The snout-to-tail length (STL) is the distance from the nose to the tip of the tail.

The straight-carapace-length (SQL) is the straight length of the curved part of the shell of a tortoise. Carapace is the curved top part of the tortoise or terrapin shell, as opposed to the flat bottom part which is the plastron length (PL).

Height and width of the enclosure must be appropriate to the species. Arboreal species require more height than terrestrial species, and the recommendations stipulated below, must be adjusted accordingly. When considering vivarium size for arboreal species the licence holder must increase the height to the sizes outlined below for length and can reduce the length of the vivarium dimensions by one third.

The following vivarium size guidelines are for a single reptile or amphibian, up to a maximum of 4 animals for group managed species unless specifically stated. For 5 to 8 animals the enclosure sizes area must double and for 9 to 12 triple, and so on.

Most amphibians and reptiles are not social and may therefore be kept individually. Decisions to pair or group-house amphibian or reptile species must be made by suitably trained and competent staff. Compatible species-specific sex ratios and suitable group sizes must be observed bearing in mind potential for persistent aggression.

Group	Length	Width	Height	Water depth (where appropriate)
Frogs and toads	30 cm or 3x <u>SVL</u> (whichever is larger)	30cm or 3x <u>SVL</u> (whichever is larger)	30cm or 3x <u>SVL</u> (whichever is larger)	2x <u>SVL</u>
Newts and salamanders	30cm or 3x <u>SVL</u> (whichever is larger)	30cm or 2x <u>SVL</u> (whichever is larger)	30cm or 3x <u>SVL</u> (whichever is larger)	2x <u>SVL</u>
Snakes	No less than 2/3 length <u>STL</u>	No less than 1/3 length <u>STL</u>	-	Not relevant
Lizards	4x <u>SVL</u>	2.5x <u>SVL</u>	-	Not relevant
Terrapins and turtles	90cm or 5x <u>PL</u> (whichever is larger)	3x <u>PL</u>	Not relevant	4x carapace height (some terrapins do not need such deep water)
Tortoises	90cm or 5x <u>PL</u> (whichever is larger)	5x <u>PL</u>	Not relevant	
Crocodilians	Land 2x <u>SVL</u> water 2.5x <u>SVL</u>	Land 1.5x <u>SVL</u> water 2x <u>SVL</u>	Prevent escape	0.3x <u>SVL</u>

Arboreal species require more height than terrestrial species and sizes, and must be adjusted accordingly.

Vivarium height for arboreal species must increase to the length outlined above. The length of the vivarium can be reduced by one third.

Cleaning for reptiles and amphibians

Faeces and urates must be removed a minimum of once daily if present. An exception to this is a system involving a larger enclosure with small species that has a mature bioactive system of management.

There must be a programme of wastewater management and treatment for all amphibians to ensure no microorganisms are accidentally released. Those selling amphibians must treat wastewater to prevent the spread of chytridiomycosis (fungus) and other viral agents prior to disposal into the sewage. The treatment chosen must be effective against the potential pathogens concerned (for example, sodium hypochlorite, more than 1% for one minute). Evidence as to how this is achieved must be available to inspectors.

Required higher standards for providing a suitable environment for reptiles and amphibians

The output of UVB lamps must be monitored with a UV meter and recorded on a weekly basis. Species specific requirements must be documented and available for inspection.

Specific written protocols for the quarantine or prevention of release of chytridiomycosis and potentially other biological agents must be available for inspection where amphibians are maintained.

For thermostatically stable vivaria, temperature assessment must be increased to 3 times weekly to document maximum and minimum temperatures.

Where applicable, a minimum of 2 hides or sheltered areas must be provided and located in different areas of the thermogradient.

Optional higher standards for providing a suitable environment for reptiles and amphibians

Large established or permanent reptilian vivaria with water features must have water filtration systems to ensure hygiene is maintained.

For species that require brumation, designated facilities must be available and a related policy regarding temperature and other husbandry requirements available for inspection.

Suitable thermogradient, humidity and UVB index (where applicable) for the species must be displayed on each vivarium.

Sizing of vivaria and associated environmental parameters must meet or exceed those outlined in the higher standards.

Minimum enclosure sizes for reptiles and amphibians - higher standards

Group	Maximum stocking density	Length	Width	Height	Space per additional animal	Water depth (where appropriate)
Frogs and toads	3	30cm or 6x <u>SVL</u> (whichever is larger)	30cm or 6x <u>SVL</u> (whichever is larger)	30cm or 6x <u>SVL</u> (whichever is larger)	1/3 length	2x <u>SVL</u>
Newts and salamanders	3	30cm or 3x <u>SVL</u> (whichever is larger)	30cm or 2x <u>SVL</u> (whichever is larger)	30cm or 3x <u>SVL</u> (whichever is larger)	1/3 length	2x <u>SVL</u>
Lizards	1 to 4	4x <u>SVL</u>	2.5x <u>SVL</u>	2.5x <u>SVL</u>	1/3	Not relevant
Terrapins and turtles	1 to 4	90cm or 8x <u>PL</u> (whichever is larger)	4x <u>PL</u>	2x <u>PL</u> plus 20 to 30cm	1/3	4x carapace height (some terrapins do not need such deep water)
Tortoises	1 to 4	90cm or 8x <u>PL</u> (whichever is larger)	4x <u>PL</u>	2x <u>PL</u> + 20-30cm	1/3	
Crocodylians	1	Land 4x <u>SVL</u> , water 5x <u>SVL</u>	Land 3x <u>SVL</u> , water 4x <u>SVL</u>	Prevent escape	Not applicable	0.3x <u>SVL</u>

Arboreal species require more height than terrestrial species and sizes, and must be adjusted accordingly.

Vivarium height for arboreal species must increase to the length outlined above. The length of the vivarium can be reduced by one third.

6.0 Suitable diet for reptiles and amphibians

Diet for reptiles and amphibians

Live invertebrates must be gut loaded or dusted with a suitable vitamin or mineral mix used according to the manufacturer's instructions and with regard to the specific needs of the animal.

Feeding reptiles and amphibians

Licence holders must maintain written records of feeding for all snakes, including hatchlings, which must be made available to buyers and inspectors.

In situations where a specific reptile species is known to prefer to have food left in for 24 hours, this practice is considered acceptable but must be reflected in the individual species' care sheet.

Water for reptiles and amphibians

Fresh water must be available at all times with the exception of certain desert species, which must be offered water at a frequency suitable to the species.

As appropriate to species, amphibians and reptiles must be given access to water in a form that allows them to submerge or bathe within.

Certain species, such as chameleons and some amphibians, do not often drink from standing water and must be offered water appropriately using an appropriate method, such as a dripper system or sprayer.

7.0 Monitoring of behaviour and training of reptiles and amphibians

Enrichment for reptiles and amphibians

Enclosures must be furnished in such a fashion as to allow inhabitants to exhibit natural behaviour, like climb or hide.

All vivaria must be provided with hides or species appropriate areas of shelter.

Habituation of reptiles and amphibians

Handling must be kept to a minimum at all times except where the licence holder can demonstrate that it is in the best interest of the animal, like to habituate the animal to handling for the purpose of health-checking. Beneficial and positive contact depends on species and can include feeding and training.

8.0 Reptiles and amphibians handling and interactions

For amphibians, water of quality similar to that used to house them must be used for hand washing prior to handling to prevent damage to species with moist skin. Hands must be clean and wet.

Optional higher standard for reptiles and amphibians handling and interactions

Moist, non-powdered nitrile gloves (or similar) must be used to handle amphibians.

9.0 Protecting reptiles and amphibians from pain, suffering, injury and disease

A dedicated area for storage of cadavers must be present separate from food stores.

Required higher standard for isolating or quarantining reptiles and amphibians

A dedicated area of isolation or quarantine must be available with associated protocols and policies in place to ensure biosecurity of the premises.

Part L – Fish

'Coldwater species' refers to freshwater ornamental fish species which are kept in unheated aquaria, vats or ponds.

These include, but are not limited to:

- goldfish (all varieties)
- common carp (including Koi)

- tench
- orfe
- rudd
- sturgeon

'Tropical freshwater' refers to all those freshwater ornamental fish species that must be kept in heated aquaria.

'Tropical Marine' refers to all those ornamental fish species that must be kept in sea water and heated aquaria.

'Temperate' refers to those species that are suitable for unheated aquaria kept in centrally heated rooms only.

'Centralised systems' refers to multiple aquaria or vats which are connected via pipework to a central sump tank and filter. Water is circulated through the system, so that no water travels directly from one aquaria or vat to another. It instead travels via a biological filter and (possibly) other devices such as UV or ozone. Water quality in such systems is wholly dependent on the management of the whole system.

'Standalone system' refers to aquaria or vats which do not share water with others. Filtration (and heating) is provided individually to each aquarium or vat. Water quality in such systems is wholly dependent on the management of each individual aquarium or vat.

3.0 Use, number and type of fish

There are more than 4,000 species of fish in trade whose welfare needs can be met based on a broad categorisation. It is not considered necessary nor feasible to individually identify all fish held within a facility.

It is acceptable for fish to be categorised in broad groupings of:

- cold water
- tropical marine
- tropical freshwater

The maintenance of water quality standards is used to determine working stocking densities.

The water quality standards must not be met at the expense of a correct feeding regime.

Exceptions to these standards might occur:

- when aquatic organisms are diseased
- after transport
- after another form other stress

However, in these cases appropriate remedial actions like treatment, acclimatisation or isolation must be undertaken.

5.0 Suitable environment for fish

Reducing the risk of fish getting injured, ill or escaping

Fish must be able to move freely and turn around in aquariums or ponds.

Some facilities will be handling very high numbers of animals on a daily basis, and at such facilities some standing water may be expected. Where there is some standing water, all facilities must take precautions to prevent and control the spread of disease and infection.

Temperature for fish

Temperature must be maintained within the optimal range for the fish species housed and kept as stable as possible. Changes in temperature must take place gradually. Sudden fluctuations in temperature and water quality parameters must be avoided.

Suitable temperature ranges must be included in point of sale information provided to retail customers.

Temperatures must be monitored daily with any deviations from the expected range recorded and the remedial measures being undertaken outlined.

During periods of particularly hot or cold weather, the identified parameters may be exceeded for short periods, where this does not affect their welfare. Fish under quarantine or treatment may often be kept at slightly higher temperatures (1 to 3°C higher than normal).

At high temperatures, it may be necessary to provide supplementary aeration or oxygenation of enclosure water.

The placement of aquaria in shop windows must be avoided so fish are not exposed to excessive heat or light.

For centralised systems, the water temperature must be appropriate to meet the husbandry requirements and temperature range for that fish category (coldwater, tropical or freshwater). It will usually be set at the mid-range between different species within a category.

Water temperature for temperate fish must never fall below 17°C. Temperate fish are defined as those sold as being suitable for unheated aquariums, kept in centrally heated rooms only. Consideration must be given to the few fish species to which this is considered to be suitable and purchasers must be advised accordingly as to appropriate conditions to meet the welfare needs of the fish. In the case of doubt, licence holders must adopt a cautious attitude unless the species is a recognised coldwater one. These species must be kept in heated aquaria, such as in an aquarium with a thermostatically controlled heater.

Temperature ranges of ornamental fish

Category	Fish groups (by common name)	Temperature range
Coldwater	Goldfish (kept in aquariums)	4 to 25°C
	Fancy goldfish (all varieties)	4 to 25°C
	Pond fish (including goldfish, Koi carp, Orfe, Rudd and Tench)	4 to 24°C
Tropical freshwater	Hillstream Loach, White Cloud Mountain, Minnows and Weather Loaches	17 to 23°C
	Tetras, Rasboras and Danios	18 to 27°C
	Guppies, Swordtails, Mollies and Platies	18 to 28°C
	Barbs	20 to 27°C
	Bettas, Gouramis and Paradise fish	Majority will tolerate a range of 22 to 28°C. Paradise fish can tolerate cooler temperatures of 17°C
	Rainbowfish	21 to 28°C
	Freshwater sharks (not related to true sharks)	22 to 26°C
	Dwarf Cichlids	Mid range of 23 to 28°C
	Discus	26 to 30°C
	American Cichlids (for example, Angelfish, Oscar, Parrot Cichlid, Severum, Firemouth Cichlid, Convict Cichlid and Jack Dempsey)	22 to 28°C
	African Malawi Cichlids	23 to 28°C
	Freshwater stingrays, Knifefish and Elephant noses	20 to 26°C
	Piranhas, Snakeheads and Wolf fish	22 to 27°C
Catfish (for example, Corydoras, Suckermouth catfish)	21 to 28°C	
Tropical algae eaters (for example, Plecs (Plecostomus))	20 to 28°C	
Killifish	20 to 26°C	
Loches (family <i>Cobitidae</i>)	20 to 26°C	
Large fish (for example, Giraffe catfish, Pacu, Giant Gourami)	22 to 28°C	
Monos, Scats, Archers and Puffers (brackish water)	22 to 30°C	
Marine	Clownfish, Damsels, Chromis and Basslets	23 to 28°C

Category	Fish groups (by common name)	Temperature range
	Blennies, Gobies, Jawfish, Dwarf Wrasse and Dartfish	23 to 28°C
	Butterflyfish, Tangs	23 to 28°C
	Dwarf angelfish	23 to 28°C
	Angelfish	23 to 28°C
	Seahorses and Pipefish	23 to 28°C
	Morays, Groupers and Triggerfish	23 to 26°C
	Poisonous and venomous fish (for example, lionfish, scorpionfish, boxfish, frogfish, rabbitfish and pufferfish)	23 to 26°C

Water quality for fish

Ammonia and nitrite are toxic to fish and their accumulation must be avoided.

See the [water quality standards](#) that must be followed.

Water quality must be checked weekly and records kept of results for ammonia, nitrite and nitrate. Water testing must take place in stocked tanks.

Centralised systems must be tested weekly. 10% of individually filtered tanks or vats must be tested weekly. Testing may be via electronic means for relevant parameters. If a visual inspection of aquaria or vats indicates unusual behaviour or deaths, any necessary remedial action must be undertaken and recorded.

Fish must not be subject to sudden fluctuation in chemical composition of their water, other than for the controlled treatment of disease or as part of a controlled breeding programme. In case of doubt, expert advice must be sought.

Light for fish

Fish must be maintained on an appropriate photoperiod (day and night cycle) as far as possible.

For fish kept in outdoor ponds, vats and stock tanks shade from direct sunlight must be provided (for example, by the provision of plants or other shade).

Water quality standards

Water quality parameter	Measurement standard, milligrams per litre (mg/l)
Cold water species	
Free ammonia	max 0.02mg/l
Nitrite	max 0.2mg/l
Dissolved oxygen	min 6mg/l
Nitrate	max 50mg/labove ambient tap water
Tropical freshwater species	
Free ammonia	max 0.02mg/l
Nitrite	max 0.2mg/l
Dissolved oxygen	min 6mg/l
Nitrate	max 50mg/labove ambient tap water
Tropical marine species	

Water quality parameter	Measurement standard, milligrams per litre (mg/l)
Free ammonia	max 0.01mg/l
Nitrite	max 0.125mg/l
Nitrate	max 100mg/l
pH	min 8.1
Dissolved oxygen	min 4mg/l

Cleaning fish

All aquaria, vats and ponds must be kept free of accumulations of suspended waste products or uneaten feed. Excess accumulation may affect water quality and therefore damage fish health. Waste material must be removed as necessary. Cleaning regimes must be sensitive to species-specific needs, as certain fish species may benefit from controlled algal build-up to facilitate grazing behaviour. Care must be taken to minimise stress during cleaning.

Accessibility to staff

Racked systems must be accessible by use of a stepladder or other such means.

Feed for fish

Food must be added directly to the tank or pond.

Required higher standards for providing a suitable environment for fish

Water quality must be assessed 3 times weekly and records kept of test results. In instances when water quality parameters are not met, the remedial action taken to restore acceptable parameters should be recorded.

There must be evidence that UV systems are maintained regularly.

Optional higher standard for providing a suitable environment for fish

A suitable temperature range for the fish must be displayed on each standalone system and on each centralised system.

For premises with no natural light, there must be automated systems or procedures (or both) to ensure gradual change in light levels.

6.0 Suitable diet for fish

Fish must be fed a diet suitable for that species at an appropriate feeding rate and frequency and so as to avoid competition. For example, feeding across the whole surface of the aquaria or pond and extending feeding times.

Licence holders selling to the general public must have an understanding of the nutritional requirements of the categories of fish they sell and must advise the owner of these requirements.

Feeding fish

Given the numbers of fish that might be held in any one facility, it is not feasible to monitor and record changes in eating habits of individual fish. The feeding behaviour of groups of fish must be recorded if such behaviour changes significantly and appropriate advice obtained from a competent specialist when appropriate.

7.0 Monitoring of behaviour and training of fish

Any items that get in the way of the safe and easy capture of fish must not be used or must be removed from tanks prior to capture.

8.0 Fish handling and interactions

Handling must be kept to a minimum at all times.

9.0 Protecting fish from pain, suffering, injury and disease

Staff must take precautions to prevent cross-contamination between aquaria or vats. Equipment (for example, nets) must normally be cleaned and disinfected between uses or dedicated to a specific tank.

Aquaria and vats must be checked daily and cleaned as often as is necessary (as determined by water quality) to maintain good hygiene standards, consistent with the rate of stock turnover and consequent stocking densities.

For fish, in-line UV treatment or other sterilising devices effectively provide a means of isolating individual tanks in multiple tank systems and are a suitable alternative to self-contained isolation facilities. They must be of an appropriate size and maintained in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations.

Newly introduced stocks must be given an appropriate acclimatisation period, as deemed necessary, as far as possible separate from existing stocks. New stocks must be closely monitored and any disease problem which arises must be treated promptly.

Fish waste, including cadavers, may be incinerated or disposed of through general waste in sealed double-bagged plastic bags.

Fish showing signs of illness or disease may be kept with other animals provided that all the fish in the same tank (or in connected systems without a sterilisation filter) are given appropriate treatment. In cases of doubt about appropriate treatments, expert advice must be sought from a vet, competent person or fish specialist.

Anyone responsible for euthanising fish must follow recommended practices, written procedures and have been suitably trained.

In the case of fish, it is sufficient to check daily and maintain records limited to observed signs of ill health and disease. Where problems are identified, remedial action must be taken.

In cold weather, ice may form on outdoor displays such as ponds. In such cases, it is important that a hole in the ice is made by floating a plastic ball which can be removed if the water freezes (for example).

Required higher standard for protecting fish from pain, suffering, injury and disease

The business must have in place reasonable measures to prevent the import, outbreak and spread of disease. This must be demonstrated by implementation of a biosecurity plan.

Businesses consolidating imports of fish: guidance for inspectors

'Consolidators' refers to businesses which import live ornamental fish for the sole purpose of supplying imports directly to wholesalers and retailers. Routinely opening boxes compromises the welfare of the fish.

Aquaculture Production Businesses (APB's) that are authorised under regulation 5(1) of the [Aquatic Animal Health \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2009](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2009/463/regulation/3?view=extent) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2009/463/regulation/3?view=extent>), and that are inspected by the Fish Health Inspectorate, are exempt from the requirement to have a licence.

In the case of APBs, if local authorities consider they need specialist advice they should consult the Fish Health Inspectorate who are experienced in the inspection of these businesses.

Conditions for businesses consolidating imports of fish

This section outlines the conditions that can be checked on inspection and the additional conditions that must be applied to such businesses.

When inspecting business, you should check the general conditions:

- 1.0 (licence display)
- 2.1 (type of animals to be specified)
- 3.3 (written training policy) - at least one designated member of staff to be on site with an understanding of current import regulations
- 4.10 (animals not left unattended) - fish boxes must be handed over into the care of a person competent to provide necessary care from that point. They must not be dropped off and left unattended

You should also check the follow pet sales conditions:

- 2.1 (register of animals) - purchase records maintained (see retailer)
- 2.5 (advertisements) - as retailer

Fish must be transported in accordance with International Air Transport Association (IATA) and current transport regulations. The licence holder must be able to demonstrate that they have undertaken appropriate due diligence in this regard. In particular that:

Fish will be packed and transported according to JATA standards.

Distributors will meet legal obligations under current welfare in transit regulations.

Anyone transporting fish has the appropriate animal transport authorisation.

They keep records of all imported and transported fish that enables traceability to source. This condition can be met by retaining invoices and receipts. Additional record keeping is not required.

They allow access by the relevant authority to these records.

Have a contingency plan in place that is available to inspecting authorities and includes:

- Provision for the care of fish in the event of an accident
- Provision for the care of fish in the event of failure to deliver (for example, delayed delivery)
- Emergency contact telephone numbers

Required higher standards for buying and selling fish

Businesses must have:

- documented procedures that control and manage the buying and selling of fish
- internal controls in place to detect irregular transactions
- a well-maintained accounting system with a full audit trail

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