



New Regulation - Animal Licence Star Ratings 2018

As part of the new Animal Activities Licensing Regulations 2018 (AAL), which come into force on 1st October 2018 every licensed business boarding kennels, boarding catteries, dog home boarding, dog day care (and pet sales, breeding and exhibits) will be given a star rating.

Star Rating

The star rating is based on a combination of the businesses score for current animal welfare standards and risk (e.g. past history of compliance).

Scoring Matrix		Welfare Standards		
		Minor Failings (existing business that are failing to meet minimum standards)	Minimum Standards (as laid down in the schedules and guidance)	Higher Standards (as laid down in the guidance)
Risk	Low Risk	1 Star 1yr licence Min 1 unannounced visit within 12 month period	3 Star 2yr licence Min 1 unannounced visit within 24 month period	5 Star 3yr licence Min 1 unannounced visit within 36 month period
	High Risk	1 Star 1yr licence Min 1 unannounced visit within 12 month period	2 Star 1yr licence Min 1 unannounced visit within 12 month period	4 Star 2yr licence Min 1 unannounced visit within 24 month period

Welfare Standards

The welfare standards are those set out in the regulations and guidance to the regulations. All businesses should meet the standards to get a licence and therefore receive a 2 or 3 star rating. However, minor failings that do not compromise the welfare of animals, e.g. minor administrative issues, may allow for a licence but with a rating of 1 star.

The guidance to the regulations includes a number of higher standards which businesses may aspire to in order to receive a higher standard rating. These are divided into required and optional. A business needs to meet all the required higher standards and 50% of the optional ones to qualify as meeting higher standards.

The higher standards are specific to the type of activity but in general relate to things like level of qualifications, exercise/enrichment availability and staff ratios. Those achieving higher standards will get a rating of 4 or 5 stars.

For more details see:

[Dog Home Boarding Regulations](#)

[Dog Daycare Regulations](#)

Risk Score

The welfare standard rating is combined with the risk score. Risk is based on the likelihood of satisfactory compliance being maintained in future.

A new applicant (someone who has not previously had a licence) will automatically be considered as high risk due to a lack of history of compliance. Otherwise, the risk score is calculated by scoring 11 factors as low risk (1 point) or high risk (2 points) with a total score of 17 or less giving an overall Low risk score and 18 or more a High Risk score.

	Low (Score 1 Point)	High (Score 2 Points)
Compliance History - inspections	Documented evidence from formal inspections over the previous three years reveal consistent and high levels of compliance in terms of welfare standards and risk management.	Formal inspections over the previous three years reveal some degree of non-compliance that has required the intervention of the inspector for the business to ultimately recognise and address these. More serious breaches would attract other enforcement action: suspension, revocation, prosecution.
Compliance History - follow up action	No evidence of follow-up action by local authority in the last year apart from providing the licence holder with a copy of the inspection report, or sending them a letter identifying some minor, administrative areas for improvement (e.g. minor	Follow up action by the local authority, such as sending them letters, triggered by low level non-compliance that is not addressed, or the business does not recognise the significance of the need to address the non-compliance.

	record keeping issues).	
Compliance History - re-inspection	No re-inspection necessary (apart from standard unannounced inspection) before next planned licence inspection / renewal	Re-inspection necessary to ensure compliance.
Complaint History - complaints to the LA	No complaints received direct to the LA that are justified in relation to welfare standards or procedural issues during the previous three years.	Low level substantiated complaints identifying concerns over the business / licence holder have been received within the previous three years.
Complaint History - complaints to the business	Licence holder records and documents any feedback received directly, in order to demonstrate compliance and willingness to address issues, and can provide evidence of this.	Licence holder does not record feedback received directly or show willingness to address any issues identified.
Appreciation of welfare standards - enrichment	Sound understanding by the licence holder of relevant environmental enrichment applicable to the activity (guided by expert advice), with demonstrated implementation.	Little environmental enrichment present, inconsistently used and its importance not understood or really valued.
Appreciation of hazards / risks	Licence holder clearly understands their role and responsibilities under the legislation. Hazards to both staff and animals clearly understood, properly controlled and reviewed with supporting evidence where applicable.	Licence holder not fully engaged with their role/responsibilities, lacks time to fulfil role, no system for review and reassessment of hazards to both animals and staff.
Appreciation of hazards / risks - maintenance	A suitably planned maintenance, repair and replacement program for infrastructure and equipment is in place.	No planned maintenance program. Building, installations and equipment allowed to deteriorate before action is implemented.
Appreciation of hazards / risks - knowledge and experience	Staff have specialist and appropriate knowledge of the taxa / species that are kept. There is sufficient staff, time and resource for daily, adequate routine monitoring, evidenced through records and staff rotas.	Key staff lack experience / knowledge of the species. Staff appear overburdened and / or unsupported by management, corners being cut.

Appreciation of hazards / risks - dealing with issues	Clear defined roles / responsibilities of staff, with clear processes for reporting and addressing any identified issues.	Lack of any process, or ownership and responsibility within the business to identify and deal with issues.
Welfare management procedures - written procedures	Written procedures / policies clearly documented, implemented and reviewed appropriately.	Limited written procedures / policies. No overall strategic control or direction.
Welfare management procedures - supervision of staff	Appropriate supervision of staff evident where applicable.	Inadequate supervision of staff evident on inspection or from the training records.
Welfare management procedures - record keeping	All required records maintained and made available.	Poor standard of record keeping, records out of date or appear to be being manufactured - relevance of records not appreciated.
Welfare management procedures - training	Planned training programme for staff to review and assess competency, with documented training records.	Little or no evidence of relevant training or system for review and reassessment.
Total Score of 17 or less = Low risk Score of 18 or more = Higher risk.		

Where there is any uncertainty, if a business cannot provide satisfactory evidence that it is low risk in a given category, it will be scored as high risk. When assessing risk the inspector should also factor in the scale of the business.

When will I get my rating?

Businesses will get a rating after each inspection to grant or renew a licence. You can also be re-rated if you request a re-inspection (e.g. you got a low rating, made changes and want your rating re-evaluated). Businesses may also be re-rated following an unannounced or additional inspection (e.g. following a complaint), if major issues are highlighted that require follow up action.

I do day care and boarding do I get a rating for each?

No, you'll get one overall rating. If you meet different standards for different activities (e.g. higher standard for home boarding v. minimum standards for day care) then the overall score will be the lower of the two.

Will I be told how my rating is calculated?

Yes, the council should explain in writing why you got the rating you did, including the scores for each rating point and a list of the standards you are currently failing to meet.

Can I appeal if I think my rating is wrong?

Yes, you have 21 days to appeal your rating (you must do this in writing or via email). The appeal must be considered by someone not involved in deciding the initial rating/carrying out the original inspection.

Can I ask for my rating to be increased between inspections?

Yes, you can request a re-inspection, for example if you have made changes so you meet higher standard and think you would now be eligible for a higher rating. You will need to pay for the re-inspection though. After you request a re-inspection the council should carry it out within 3 months.

Will ratings be published?

Your star rating will be included on your licence certificate and councils are encouraged (although not required) to publish a list of licensed businesses and their ratings on their website.