

Proposed Model Licence Conditions and Guidance Notes  
for Dog Boarding Establishments.

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### INTRODUCTION

Animal welfare is becoming an increasingly important factor in all aspects of animal husbandry. Methods of care which only a generation ago were accepted as normal and standard practice have been reviewed, updated and modified to acknowledge present day attitudes and expectations. The highest standards of welfare, both physical and mental are critical to commercial success and public acceptance for boarding establishments.

Without good levels of animal care, compliance with the animal welfare acts cannot be achieved.

This new version of the Model Licence Conditions for Dog Boarding Establishments incorporates the five "needs" for animal welfare which are enshrined in the animal welfare acts of 2006:

1. Need for a suitable diet - by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
2. Need for a suitable environment - by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
3. Need to exhibit normal behaviour patterns - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and contact with humans and with other dogs if appropriate and in a safe environment.
4. Need to be free from pain and injury - by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
5. Need to be free from fear and distress - by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

By adhering to these Model Licence Conditions for Dog Boarding Establishments, kennel proprietors will subscribe to a Code of Practice for boarding to guarantee the highest standards of animal care and customer service across the sector.

The original version stated that the aims of the MLC were "to ensure that high standards of animal care and health and safety are maintained in animal boarding establishments". However although the original MLC detailed the minimum conditions for the physical wellbeing and described conditions for the housing of the animals, it contained little guidance for the mental wellbeing of the animals.

It is imperative that both licensing authorities and kennel operators have as priority the physical and mental wellbeing of the animals being boarded, and that these principles should have precedence over other areas when inspecting, in line with the MLC conditions. In short, if a boarding establishment obviously offers excellent quality in the general care and management of the animals, then the licensing authority should not withhold a licence simply because of one or two minor non-compliance factors.

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In new establishments there is an expectation that all appropriate conditions should be met as a basic minimum standard. In existing establishments it is accepted that some of the conditions may need to be phased in over a period of time, by agreement between the establishment owner and the local authority. In this case a licence should be issued, subject to an agreed scheme of works and a suitably realistic timescale for implementation.

### **Home Boarding**

Home boarding is defined as the boarding of dogs in a private residence. Despite this fundamental difference from boarding kennels it nevertheless requires a set of standards to be adhered to. Those operating home boarding businesses are still required to be licensed, and it is recommended that inspection officers are aware of the MLC standards for boarding when assessing issues surrounding home boarding.

### **Dog Sitting**

Dog sitting is defined as the caring of dogs in a private residence where it habitually resides, in the absence of the house owner. Despite this fundamental difference from boarding kennels, it nevertheless requires a set of standards to be adhered to. Although, those operating pet sitting businesses are not required to be licensed at present, it is recommended that sitters are aware of the MLC for boarding, and operate their business accordingly.

### **Other Relevant Legislation**

Other legislation which is relevant to the running of a boarding kennel includes, but is not restricted to, the following:

Animal Welfare Act 2006  
The Control Of Dogs Order 1992  
Dangerous Dogs Act 1991  
Employment Legislation  
The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005  
Health And Safety At Work Etc Act 1974  
Environmental Protection Act 1990  
Electricity At Work Regulations 1989  
Control Of Substances Hazardous To Health Regulations 1988  
Controlled Waste Regulations 1992

Further information on the above is available from business link.  
[www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk)

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## SECTION 1 LICENCE DISPLAY

### Summary

The kennel owner has an obligation to make sure their business complies with all relevant current legislation and acts accordingly.

The principal legislation dealing with animal boarding establishments is the Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963 which addresses the areas to be covered by the licence relating to animal welfare and management. It is essential that consumers and those responsible for premises management are aware of the licence conditions.

It is advisable that kennel owners insure against public liability, third party liability, liability for death/loss of an animal in their care and veterinary fees.

Establishments receiving both dogs and cats: When the granting of the licence is being considered by the local authority, there will be a presumption against cats and dogs being kept within sight of each other, unless good reason can be made otherwise.

Ref	Standard	Guidance
1.1.1	Businesses operating boarding establishments must be inspected and have a licence	Where a valid licence is not available the proprietor must be able to prove application and payment of relevant fee. (Where the Local Authority has not issued an application form or licence the proprietor must be able to prove written communication with them insisting upon inspection and issue of a licence).
1.1.2	A copy of the licence must be displayed to the public in a prominent position in, on or about the boarding establishment and a copy of the conditions available.	The licence should be on display in a place that is easily visible to visitors.

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## SECTION 2 ANIMAL WELFARE

### Summary

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 (in England and Wales with a similar Act in Scotland and additions in relation to Northern Ireland) requires that anyone who has responsibility for an animal has a legal duty to meet the five basic welfare needs described below. This legal duty now extends to boarding kennels. Proprietors of kennels will be required to ensure all animals in their care are given at least the minimum standard of care as stated in the five needs. Although this has always been good practice, it is now illegal not to do so. Secondary legislation may be introduced to allow for the production of Codes of Practice for boarding establishments.

Ref	Standard	Guidance
<b>2.1 Need for a Suitable Diet</b>		
2.1.1	Animals must have access to fresh water at all times	Ensure that a system is in place to confirm that there is access to fresh water at all times and that regular checks are continually made to make sure that each animal has enough water.
2.1.2	All animals must be provided with a diet to maintain full health and vigour	Ensure that dogs are offered a wholesome diet that is suitable for the type, age and breed.
<b>2.2 Need for a Suitable Environment</b>		
2.2.1	All animals must be provided with an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.	<p>Ensure that the dog has an appropriate shelter and environment which provides protection from temperature and weather extremes and that the dog has freedom to move to a cooler or warmer place when necessary.</p> <p>Ensure that the dog has a comfortable resting place of their own where they can feel safe and secure.</p> <p>Ensure that the dog is housed in an environment free from things that could cause harm.</p> <p>Dogs should have access to natural light.</p>

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<b>2.3 Need to be Free from Pain, Injury or Disease</b>	
2.3.1	<p>Any sick or injured animal must receive appropriate care and treatment without delay. Veterinary advice should be sought whenever necessary.</p> <p>Minimise the risk of disease through providing environmental conditions and staff training so that any signs of disease or injury are referred to the manager and/or the Vet as appropriate</p> <p>Veterinary advice should be sought for anything other than minor ailments.</p>
2.3.2	<p>All animal housing and exercise areas should be in a good state of repair to prevent injuries as far as reasonably possible.</p> <p>Ensure that the dog is housed and exercised in an environment free from hazards that could cause harm.</p> <p>Ensure there are no sharp edges, cracked or significant chips in glass, rust or bare wood or anything else that could pose a hazard to animals.</p>
<b>2.4 Need to Express Normal Behaviour Patterns</b>	
2.4.1	<p>All animals must be provided with sufficient space to allow for normal behaviour.</p> <p>Refer to Kennel sizes (appendix 1)</p>
2.4.2	<p>All animals must be given the opportunity for daily interaction and stimulation.</p> <p>An appropriate schedule of exercise, play, and other human contact should be implemented to ensure that dogs get sufficient human contact. In so far as is practicable, safe and in proportion to the length of stay at the kennel</p> <p>Note: Many dogs have almost constant human companionship but little or no contact with other dogs. To place these dogs in a multi dog environment could cause fear and stress, so when developing a socialisation schedule the individual dog, together with the wishes of the client should be taken into consideration.</p>
2.4.3	<p>All establishments must develop and implement an appropriate enrichment plan to ensure the dog is not deprived of sensory stimulation.</p> <p>Exercise and stimulation should be implemented on a daily basis to avoid boredom and frustration. A correct balance between mental wellbeing and clinical hygiene should be found. A dog should not be deprived of sensory stimulation simply to "keep it quiet". Barking is often a dog's way of exhibiting normal behaviour and within reason should be seen as part of normal behaviour.</p>
2.4.4	<p>2.4.4 Animal housed in indoor accommodation*</p> <p>It is recommended that this should be at least 1 hour a day. This can be</p>

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	must be let out of their accommodation at suitable and regular intervals.	walking, playing or letting dogs run free in a secure exercise area, but can also include times spent in the grooming room or other social interactive activities. *Indoor accommodation is an inside kennel unit with no attached run.
<b>2.5 Need to be free from Fear and Distress</b>		
2.5.1	All establishments must provide conditions and care for animals which avoid fear and distress.	Some dogs thrive on the exciting and hectic kennel life while others and frightened by the proximity of strangers, both human and animal. Where ever possible kennels should have a "quiet corner" or prevent direct view of other dogs to cater for the timid type of dog. Animals must be offered the opportunity to hide as a natural instinct. Where possible kennels should be designed to provide an area where timid dogs can feel safe.

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**SECTION 3 OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT**

Ref	Standard	Guidance
<b>3.1 Hygiene</b>		
3.1.1	All animal accommodation, including corridors, common areas, kitchens etc must be kept clean, dry and free from accumulations of dirt and dust and must be kept in such a manner as to be conducive to maintenance of disease control and dog comfort.	
3.1.2	All occupied accommodation must be cleaned at least once daily.	Excreta and soiled material must be removed from all areas used by dogs at least daily and more often if necessary.
3.1.3	All bedding must be kept clean and dry as far as reasonably possible.	Bedding should be changed as required.
3.1.4	Upon vacation a dog unit including all fittings and bedding must be thoroughly cleaned, disinfected and dried, before another dog is placed in the unit.	As each kennel is vacated, the kennel including all fittings, beds bedding, water bowls and other furniture should be removed and be disinfected prior to another dog is placed in the kennel.
3.1.5	Facilities must be provided for the proper, storage and disposal of all waste.	
3.1.6	Measures must be taken to minimize the risks from rodents and other pests within the establishment.	



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<b>3.2 Kitchen Facilities</b>	
3.2.1	<p>There should be a suitable "fit for purpose" area that is used exclusively for the storage and preparation of boarder's meals.</p> <p>This should include a food preparation area, food storage and a sink with hot and cold water must be provided for the washing of bowls and other equipment.</p>
3.2.2	<p>All animal feeds must be stored appropriately.</p> <p>Where fresh and cooked meats are used, refrigeration facilities should be provided, and potential food contamination must be avoided.</p> <p>Dry food should be kept in dry rodent and insect proof containers.</p> <p>A dry and vermin proof area should be provided for bulk storage of food stock</p> <p>All other food stuffs should be stored appropriately.</p>
3.2.3	<p>All eating and drinking bowls must be capable of being easily cleaned and disinfected to prevent cross-contamination.</p> <p>They must be maintained in a clean condition.</p> <p>All equipment used for feeding and providing water must be kept in a clean and hygienic condition.</p>
3.2.4	<p>All feeding bowls must be cleaned after each meal. Drinking bowls must be cleaned at least once a day.</p> <p>The use of disposable dishes is acceptable but is intended for single use only.</p>
<b>3.3 Temperature in Kennels</b>	
3.3.1	<p>An adequate procedure should be in place to protect dogs from extremes of temperature.</p> <p>It is recommended that temperatures should not normally fall below 10 °C (at night )or exceed 26 °C</p> <p>Establishments should have a hot and cold weather policy to protect animals from extreme temperatures</p> <p>However different dogs tolerate different ranges of temperature therefore this should be considered for individual dogs.</p>

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3.3.2	Heating facilities must be available in the sleeping area of the dog unit and used according to the requirements of the individual dog.	There should be some part of the dogs sleeping area where the dog is able to enjoy a night time temperature suitable for the age/breed/type of dog.
3.3.3	Heating appliances must not be sited in a location or manner where they may present a risk of fire, or risk to dogs.	
<b>3.4 Disease Control and Vaccination</b>		
3.4.1	Adequate precautions must be taken to prevent and control the spread of disease and parasites amongst the dogs.	An appropriate written procedure for dealing with infectious diseases must be established.
3.4.2	Before admittance to the kennels verification of current vaccination or acceptable titer levels must be obtained.	In the absence of a valid certificate, veterinary verification of immunity should be sought before admitting the dog. e.g. by phoning the vet
3.4.3	A first-aid kit suitable for use on dogs must be available and accessible on site.	First aid materials and equipment should be available on the premises. The location of the kit should be away from public areas and be easily identifiable and accessible to all trained staff. A designated person should be responsible for its maintenance.  Commercial kits are available but must be kept fully stocked.
3.4.4	A suitable range of muzzles of varying sizes and a suitable dog catching device, must be kept on site.	

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<b>3.5 Supervision of Animals</b>	
3.5.1	A competent person must be present at all reasonable times whenever dogs are boarded at the premises.
3.5.2	Dogs must be visited at regular intervals as necessary for their health, safety and welfare.

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**SECTION 4 STAFF MANAGEMENT**

Ref	Standard	Guidance
4.1.1	<p>A written training policy must be provided. Systematic training of staff must be demonstrated to have been carried out.</p>	<p>A written training policy must be formulated and updated regularly. All staff must have a specific or individual training record kept in a secure place on the premises.</p> <p>It is recommended that at least one member of staff must be studying for, or hold, a relevant level 3 qualification, an industry recognised award equivalent.</p>

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**SECTION 5 KENNEL ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT**

Ref	Standard	Guidance
<b>5.1 Register</b>	A register must be kept of all dogs boarded.	
5.1.1	<p>The information kept must include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Date of arrival</li> <li>• Name of dog</li> <li>• Description, breed, age and gender of dog.</li> <li>• Name, address &amp; telephone number of owner or keeper.</li> <li>• Name and telephone number of local contact person whilst boarded.</li> <li>• Name and address and telephone number of the dog's veterinary surgeon.</li> <li>• Anticipated and actual date of departure</li> <li>• Health, welfare and nutrition requirements.</li> </ul>	<p>A note should be taken if the dog is neutered.</p> <p>A mobile phone number should also be noted if applicable, but should not be the sole means of contact.</p> <p>Information from the register essential for the daily care and welfare of the animals currently on site must also be available to key members of staff at all times.</p>
5.1.2	Information from the register required to verify accuracy of the records must be kept available for a minimum of 24 months and kept in such a manner as to allow an authorised officer easy access to such information.	Where records are computerised, a backup copy should be kept.
<b>5.2 Identification of Kennels</b>		
5.2.1	Each kennel must be clearly marked (e.g. numbered).	It is common practice to remove dogs collars while in kennels. This is to avoid the possibility of the collars becoming caught on an obstruction and also owners' collars shouldn't be relied on to be secure. Care should therefore be taken to ensure that each dog is returned to its correct kennel.
5.2.2	A system must be in place to ensure that relevant information about the dog in that kennel is readily available.	This can be a wipe clean board or a card clipped to the front of the kennel.

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<b>5.3 Emergency Procedures</b>	
<b>5.3.1</b>	There must be a written emergency plan which must be on display and known to staff.
	This should include instructions on where staff and dogs are to be evacuated to in the event of emergencies such as fire or flooding.  Emergency telephone list should include fire, police, and vets.

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**SECTION 6 CONSTRUCTION** New and Existing Buildings  
Note: There are several recognised layouts for construction and refurbishment

Ref	Standard	Guidance
<b>6.1 General</b>		
6.1.1	For new build. The establishment must be constructed in accordance with planning permission and building regulations	Application for building works may require approval from the building control department and / or the planning department.  Before carrying out any substantial alterations plans should be submitted and approved by the appointed inspector.  A record of plans and supporting paperwork should be kept on file.
<b>6.2 Layout</b>		
6.2.1	For new build. Buildings should be so constructed that they offer visual stimulation and distraction to the dogs being housed where applicable.	All buildings should be constructed in such way to be conducive to health, hygiene and disease control while simultaneously offering all dogs boarded a stimulating environment which should be as stress free as possible.  Some dogs may need a visual barrier. e.g. those which are aggressive, fearful or agitated.
6.2.2	The premises, buildings, grounds and perimeters must offer a safe and secure environment for boarders.	The design and construction should offer a safe environment for both boarders and staff.
<b>6.3 Walls And Partitions</b>		
6.3.1	Walls should be of smooth impervious materials, capable of being easily cleansed.	
6.3.2	Junctions between vertical and horizontal sections must be sealed.	
6.3.3	Internal partition walls must be of solid construction.	The height should be a minimum of 1.20m but recommended at 1.80m in new build.

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<b>6.4 Floors</b>		Floors of kennels and related exercise areas should be constructed in impervious material and be readily cleanable while providing sufficient grip for the dog to walk or run without sustaining injury.
6.4.1	Floors of all buildings, individual exercise areas and kennels, must be of smooth, impervious materials, capable of being easily cleaned.	
<b>6.5 Ceilings</b>		
6.5.1	Ceilings must be capable of being easily cleaned.	
6.5.2	For new kennels. Buildings should meet building regulations or have a minimum height of 2.30m. New kennel units within these buildings should have a minimum height of 1.83m to facilitate adequate access by kennel staff	
<b>6.6 Doors</b>		
6.6	Kennel doors must be secure and fit for purpose.	Where metal bars and frames are used, they must be of suitable gauge (minimum of 2mm) with spacing adequate to prevent dogs escaping or becoming entrapped. Where metal edging is used, this must not present a risk of injury to the dog.  It is recommended that the spacing of the wire should not exceed 50 mm.
<b>6.7 Windows</b>		
6.7.1	All windows must be escape proof at all times.	Windows when a security risk must be protected by welded mesh, or be made of reinforced glass, polycarbonate or other impact resistant material.
6.7.2	Windows should be of suitable size and placement.	



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<b>6.8 Drainage</b>	
6.8.1	The establishment must be connected to mains drainage or an approved, localised sewage disposal system.
<b>6.9 Lighting</b>	
6.9.1	During day light hours light must be provided to exercise and sleeping areas so that all parts are clearly visible. Where practicable this must be natural light.  This would ensure that animals can enjoy natural light during daylight hours.  Natural lighting may need to be supplemented even during day light to enable staff to work safely.
6.9.2	Adequate supplementary lighting must be provided throughout the establishment.  To allow efficient working throughout the year.
<b>6.10 Ventilation</b>	
6.10.1	Ventilation must be provided to all interior areas without the creation of excessive, localised draughts in the bedding area.  The use of opening a hatch should not be the only means of ventilation as there will be times when this will need to be closed.
<b>6.11 Maintenance</b>	
6.11.1	Maintenance and repair of the whole establishment must be carried out as required to maintain a safe clean environment.

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**SECTION 7 NUMBER OF ANIMALS**

**Summary**

For reasons of clarity and to avoid misinterpretation the following terminology is used in reference to kennels:

**Kennel:** An inside kennel unit and sleeping area used for housing the dogs.

**Run:** An enclosed area directly adjoined to and exclusive to the kennel.

**Exercise/play area:** A large fenced area used for exercising dog and not used for housing dogs.

The practice of confining dogs in a kennel without regular exercise is becoming more and more unacceptable, and priority should be given to offering a service which includes regular exercise. Ideally in new kennels larger exercise areas should be provided. Or as an alternative regular dog walks should be part of the daily routine. All dogs which are safe to handle must be taken out of the kennel at least once a day.

**In adverse weather the responsible person should decide whether or not dogs should be given free access to the exercise areas**

Ref	Standard	Guidance
<b>7.1 Number of Dogs Boarded</b>		
7.1.1	The maximum number of dogs to be kept at any one time is ..... [TO BE DETERMINED BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY according to the guidelines and parameters incl. the MLC relating to the size and number of kennels. Change to: according to the guidelines and measurements included in the MLC.	
7.1.2	Each dog must be provided with a separate kennel except dogs from the same household / family may share a kennel of adequate size with the written consent of the dogs' owners.	Dogs that may not know each other may become distressed or fight if sharing a kennel.

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7.1.3	Holding kennels may be provided for temporarily kennelling a dog for not more than 24 hours.	The size of the holding kennel must be large enough for the animal to stand up, turn round and lie down.
7.1.4	No animals other than dogs are to be boarded within the licenced facilities.	
7.1.5	Where stray dogs are accepted by the kennels they must be kept in a separate area away from boarded dogs.	
<b>7.2 Kennel Sizes</b>		
7.2.1	All kennels must offer adequate floor area to allow the dog sufficient room to move without hindrance.	The floor area measurement of each kennel will determine the maximum size of dog and numbers of dogs permitted in each kennel.  If there is no attached run then the kennel area should be large enough to allow separate sleeping and activity areas.  The cover should be at least part solid to offer protection from adverse weather conditions.  The exercise area must be of sufficient size to allow the dog to exhibit normal behaviour.
7.2.2	For new build kennels each kennel must be provided with a covered run.	
7.2.3	Kennels and run areas must open onto secure corridors or other secure areas so that dogs are not able to escape from the premises.	
7.2.4	Exercise areas must not be used as sleeping areas.	
<b>7.3 Exercise Facilities / Play Areas</b>		
7.3.1	In new build, Kennels must offer out of kennel exercise/play areas where appropriate in addition to the run.	New build only (2011)

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7.3.2	In new build. Exercise areas must be of sufficient size to allow dogs to run free and must be a minimum of 100m <sup>2</sup> with a shortest length of 10m.	The exercise pen is designed for dogs to be able to gallop freely. Consideration should be given to the height of the enclosure which should be a minimum of 2m if no jump guard is present.
7.3.3	An effective hygiene and cleaning procedure should be established to minimise the risk of infection.	Any faeces should be cleaned up between dogs. The risk of infection in communal areas should be minimal if good hygiene procedures are implemented.
7.3.4	In establishments without exercise/play areas a dog walking system must be implemented.	Walking dogs outside the premises requires the written consent of the owners

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**APPENDIX 1**

**Kennel Sizes - For New Builds and Refurbishments 2011**

	Sleeping	Exercise	Total
Kennel and run sizes			
Dogs under 40- 55cm at the shoulder	2.5m <sup>2</sup>	2.5m <sup>2</sup>	5.0m <sup>2</sup>
Dogs over 55cm at the shoulder	3.0m <sup>2</sup>	3.5m <sup>2</sup>	6.5m <sup>2</sup>

**Note:**

1. Recommended minimum widths of 1.2m
2. When more than one dog is boarded in the same kennel the minimum size for the kennel must be increased. It is recommended that this be by an additional 20% per dog.
3. When dogs of different sizes are boarded together the shoulder height of the larger dog should be used.

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