

Determining the length of a licence and the star rating of a business

Assessing risk & standards

This guidance describes the risk -based system that must be used when issuing animal activities licences under the Regulations with the exception of “Keeping or Training Animals for Exhibition” where all licences are issued for 3 years.

This system should be used to determine both the length of the licence and the star rating to award.

Local authorities in England are expected to follow it in full.

The purpose is to ensure consistency in implementation and operation of the licensing system by local authorities, and to ensure that consumers can be confident that the star rating applied to businesses is an accurate reflection of both their risk level and the animal welfare standards that they adopt.

Animals activity star rating system

The scoring matrix for a premises is displayed in Table 1

	SCORING MATRIX			
R		MINOR FAILINGS	MINIMUM STANDARDS	HIGHER STANDARDS
I		(Existing business that are failing to meet minimum standards)	(as laid down in the schedules and guidance)	(as laid down in the guidance)
S	LOW RISK	1 STAR 1yr Licence Min 1 unannounced visit within 12 month period	3 STAR 2yr Licence Min 1 unannounced visit within 12 month period	5 STAR 3yr Licence Min 1 unannounced visit within 24 month period
K	HIGHER 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

The model takes into account both the animal welfare standards adopted by a business as well as their level of risk (based on elements such as past compliance). This model should be used every time a licence is granted or renewed.

Businesses must be given a star rating, ranging from 1 star to 5 stars, based on this model, and the results of their inspection.

This star rating must be listed on the licence by the issuing local authority officer. The system incorporates safeguards to ensure fairness to businesses. This includes an appeal procedure and a mechanism for requesting a re-inspection for the purposes of re-rating when improvements have been made.

In order to use this model to calculate the length of the licence and associated star rating, it is necessary to address the following questions, based on the inspection and on records of past compliance:

- (a) Does the business meet the minimum standards?
- (b) Does the business meet the higher standards?
- (c) Is the business low or higher risk?

Does the business meet the minimum standards?

To obtain a licence for a single activity i.e. dog breeding, the applicant must meet the minimum standards set out in the specific Schedules to the Regulations (i.e. for Dog Breeding, Schedule 6) in addition to those in the General Schedule (Schedule 2). All businesses should meet the minimum standards but see paragraph below for minor failings.

Additional information on how to meet these standards for each activity are outlined in the relevant specific guidance documents. During an inspection, the inspector should assess whether or not the business is meeting each of these minimum standards. If this is the case, they will qualify for a minimum of a two star rating (but subject to paragraph below for minor failings).

Minor failings

If an existing business has a number of minor failings with regards to the minimum standards laid down in the schedules and the guidance, they should receive a risk rating score of 1star. These minor failings should be predominantly administrative or if they are in relation to standards, they must not compromise the welfare of the animals. If animal welfare is being compromised, a licence should not be granted/renewed or, if already in place, should be suspended or revoked.

Does the business meet the higher standards?

For each activity, a number of higher standards have been agreed. Meeting the higher standards is optional but is the only way to gain a higher star rating. The higher standards are classified in to two types: required and optional and are outlined in the relevant guidance documents for the activity in question. To distinguish required standards from optional ones they have each been given a specific colour which is used in each guidance document. Higher standards that appear in blue text are required whereas those that appear in red text are optional. To qualify as meeting the higher standards, the business needs to achieve all of the required higher standards as well as a minimum of 50% of the optional higher standards.

During an 18 inspection, the inspector should assess whether or not the business meets the required number of higher standards.

Where a scheme utilising UKAS accredited certification is operational, it will be operated against either the minimum or higher standards as set out in the certification scheme criteria and as agreed with UKAS as part of the accreditation process.

If a business is certified by a UKAS -accredited certification body to the higher standards, they should automatically be considered as meeting these standards, unless there is significant evidence of poor animal welfare or non-compliance is identified during the inspection.

Is the business low or high risk?

See table 2 Risk Scoring Table of the guidance to determine if a business that is not certified by a UKAS accredited body as low or higher risk.

The risk assessment is not meant to reconsider specific issues taken into account in assessment of compliance with the minimum or higher standards. It does, however, require an assessment on the likelihood of satisfactory compliance being maintained in the future.

In considering risk, “management” covers the system as a whole. For a multi-site business, the company wide management system and procedures are a key element of this but local site / premises management is also important as that will influence how these systems and procedures are applied.

Assessments of the written procedures should be based on the principle of proportionality, i.e. commensurate with the nature and size of the business.

For small businesses which present lower risks, it may be sufficient that the business has in place good welfare practices and understands and applies them, i.e. it meets its prerequisites.