

Conditions and Guidance for Home Boarding for Dogs

Introduction:

This document outlines the conditions that must be complied with in order to receive an animal boarding licence for the activity of providing home boarding for dogs. In order to receive a licence a business will need to meet all of the minimum standards outlined in this document. In addition, businesses are encouraged to apply higher standards.

General Conditions applicable to home boarding:

1. A copy of the licence must be clearly displayed.

Guidance: The licence must be displayed in a public-facing area of the premises such as the entrance or reception area.

- 2. The name address of the licence holder will be displayed in the boarding list on the DEFA webpage.**
- 3. The licence holder will 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. The licence holder must keep all such records for at least three years.**
- 4. No animals or types of animals other than those animals and types of animals specified in the licence may be used in relation to the relevant licensable activity.**
- 5. The number of dogs being home boarded must not exceed the maximum number specified on the licence.**
- 6. As a minimum there must be provision for a competent person to assist with care and supervision if the licence holder is absent for an extended period.**
- 7. If staff are used, then the licence holder must provide and ensure the implementation of a written training policy for all staff.**
- 8. All areas, equipment and appliances to which the animals have 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 or repair and well maintained.**

Guidance:

- *The home must be well maintained and in good repair. There must not be any sharp edges, projections, rough edges or other hazards, such as chemicals, loose cables, which may present risk of injury to a dog.*
- *No standing water from cleaning or urine is 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/claws from being caught.*

- *Doors and windows to the outside must be escape proof, securable, strong enough to resist impact and scratching and to prevent injury. External doors/gates must be lockable. Ideally 2 doors if straight out onto road/pavement.*
- *All outdoor fencing must be strong and rigid and kept in good repair to provide an escape and dig proof structure.*
- *Timber if used must be good quality, well maintained and any damaged areas sealed or over-clad. Wood must be smooth and treated to render it impervious.*
- *Any electrical sockets and appliances in the dog designated rooms and where the dogs have access to must be sure and protected against damage.*

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

- their behavioural needs,**
- its situation, space, air quality, cleanliness and temperature,**
- the water quality**
- noise levels**
- light levels**
- ventilation**

Guidance: Dogs must not be restricted to areas when climatic conditions may cause them distress. Temperature regulation must aim to keep ambient temperature above an absolute minimum of 10°C and below 26°C. Dogs should be monitored to check they are not too hot or too cold. Ventilation must be provided to all interior areas to avoid excess humidity. Heaters must not be sited in a manner or location where they present a risk of burning or electric shock/ electrocution to dogs or humans or a risk of fire. Open fires/wood burners must have adequate protection/guards in place. Excessive noise must be avoided. Dogs must not be exposed to draughts.

10. Staff must ensure that the animals are kept clean and comfortable.

Guidance: The licence holder and staff should ensure that dogs benefit from adequate routine grooming and other health regimes as needed with the owner e.g. cleaning of eyes or keeping long fur from matting. This should include attention to coat, teeth, ears and nails and inspection for parasites.

11. A toileting area and opportunities for toileting must be provided.

Guidance: Dogs must have regular opportunities throughout the day for toileting in the secure area/ and or during exercise, taking into account individual needs. They must have at least 4 opportunities per day.

- 12. Procedures must be in place to ensure accommodation and any equipment within it is cleaned as often as necessary and good hygiene standards are maintained.**
- 13. The animals should be transported and handed in a manner (including for example in relation to housing, temperature, ventilation and frequency) that protects them from pain, suffering, injury and disease.**
- 14. All animals must be easily accessible to staff for inspection. There must be sufficient light for the staff to work effectively and observe dogs.**
- 15. 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 dogs.**

Guidance: There must be multiples of all resources (food, water bowls and sleeping areas) greater than or equal to the number of dogs in any communal area. Dogs must be carefully monitored, especially at feeding times.

- 16. The dogs must not be left unattended in any situation or for any period likely to cause them distress.**

Guidance: Dogs must have human company. Dogs in homestay should not routinely be left alone for more than 3 hours in a 24 hour period.

- 17. The dogs 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.**

Guidance: Most homestays ask the dog's owner to bring the dog's own/ normal food with them.

- 18. Feed and water intake must be monitored and any problems recorded and addressed.**

Guidance: Veterinary advice must be sought, if a dog remains inappetent or a dog displays weight loss.

- 19. Feed and drinking water provided to the dogs must be unspoilt and free from contamination.**
- 20. Feed and drinking receptacles must be capable of being cleaned and disinfected, or disposable.**
- 21. Constant access to fresh, clean drinking water must be provided in a suitable receptacle for the species that requires it.**
- 22. There must be a hygienic facility to prepare feed, including hot and cold running water and storage.**

Guidance: For homestay this is normally the household kitchen.

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

Guidance: This should be agreed between the pet owner and the licence holder i.e. toys etc.

24. Dogs should be walked unless the dogs has medical reasons preventing it from exercising.

Guidance: Consideration must be given to life stage, physical and mental health and breed when planning daily exercise. No more than 4 dogs per person can be walked at one time. Dogs must be familiarised with other beforehand. Owner's consent is needed to allow mixing of dogs from different households and also off-lead exercise outside of the home environment.

25. The dogs' behaviour and any changes in behaviour must be monitored. Advice must be sought, as appropriate and without delay, from a veterinarian.

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

27. 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.

28. The dogs must be kept separately or in suitable compatible social groups appropriate to the individual animals.

Guidance: A policy must be in place for monitoring new dogs coming into a home environment. It must be possible for all newly introduced dogs to be kept away from other dogs if required. If there are resident cats, the licence holder must identify potential stressors to the cat(s) and demonstrate how these would be mitigated in order to protect the cats' welfare.

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

Guidance: At the very least a separate room, however this will often mean true isolation facilities would have to be supplied by the veterinary practice.

30. All reasonable precautions must be taken to prevent and control the spread among the dogs and people of infectious disease, pathogens and parasites.

Guidance: An up to date veterinary vaccination record must be seen to ensure that dogs have current vaccinations against parvovirus, canine distemper, canine adenovirus/infectious canine hepatitis, leptospirosis and other relevant diseases. Homeopathic vaccination is not acceptable. Certificate from a veterinarian of a recent protective titre test may be accepted instead of a booster vaccination as required by the

establishment. It is a decision of the home boarder whether to accept such a certificate. Worming treatment should be checked especially if children are living at the homestay.

- 31. Sick or injured animals must receive prompt attention from a veterinarian and the advice of that veterinarian must be followed.**
- 32. 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 veterinarian.**
- 33. Cleaning products must be suitable, safe and effective. They must be stored and disposed of in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and used in a way which prevents distress or suffering of the animals.**

Specific conditions – Home boarding

- 1. Dogs must be accommodated within the home.**

Guidance: There must be no use of external construction of buildings or cages for home boarding dogs. Owners that request homestay clearly desire a home-like environment for their pet.

- 2. The home must include a private, non-communal, secure and hazard free external area.**

Guidance: The area/garden must only be used by the licence holder i.e. no shared gardens.

- 3. Dogs from different households may only be boarded at the same time with consent of every owner.**
- 4. No more than four dogs may be boarded "homestay"**

Guidance: Owners expect their pet to be kept in a dwelling and be part of the family. This precludes the boarding of large numbers of dogs as this is not a normal home environment. The number of animals on the licence depends on the size of the house and the number of licence holder's own dogs.

- 5. Each dog must have a clean, comfortable and warm area where it can rest and sleep.**

Guidance: In comparing homestay with kennels, the presence of carpets in most houses precludes the washing and disinfecting of such surfaces and results in a different standard of hygiene.

- 6. A dog must not be kept in a crate unless:**
 - a. It is already habituated to it.**
 - b. A crate forms part of the normal routine for the dog.**
 - c. The dog's owner has consented to the use of a crate.**

7. **Any crate in which a dog is kept must be in good condition and sufficiently large for the dog to sit and stand in it at full-height, lie flat and turn around.**
8. **Unneutered bitches must be prevented from mating.**

Guidance: In season bitches must not be accepted for boarding with entire male dogs from other households.

9. **If any person aged under 16 years resides at the home there must be procedures in place to regulate the interactions between the dogs and that person.**

Guidance: The licence holder is required to undertake an assessment of the risks of home boarding to include the risk to or caused by children who are likely to be at the property.

10. **A register must be kept of all the dogs at the premises which must include**
 - a. **The dates of each dog's arrival and departure**
 - b. **Each dog's name, age, sex, neuter status, and description**
 - c. **The number of dogs from the same household**
 - d. **The name, postal address, telephone number of the owner of each dog and emergency contact details**
 - e. **The name and contact details of the dog's normal veterinarian**
 - f. **Details of the dog's relevant medical and behavioural history, details of current medical treatment, diet and vaccinations.**

11. **Premises can offer homestay or kennels – but not both.**

Guidance: If a homestay also does doggy day care then this should be run as a separate business if dogs are kept in outside buildings for daycare (as this now not a home environment).