

Animal Licensing - Frequently Asked Questions

Updated 15 May 2020

The aim of this document is to assist businesses licensed under the Animal Welfare Regulations 2018 to operate as safely as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic.

All businesses are advised that government assistance may be available to them, whether they close or not. You can find more information [here](#).

Licensed Animal Boarding (commercial boarding in kennels and catteries, home dog boarding, dog day care):

Q1. Should I still be operating my business?

A. Provided the business is not subject to the closure restrictions as detailed in the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020, they can continue operating. Certain animal boarding establishments may remain open in the following circumstances:

- For dogs or cats boarded on behalf of key workers
- For dogs or cats needing to remain at the boarding establishment due to the owners being stuck abroad
- For dogs or cats needing to remain at the boarding establishment due to the owners having to self-isolate

Q2. My licence is due to expire, can it be extended?

A. The Council has taken the decision to automatically extend by 3 months all animal licenses that expire during the COVID-19 pandemic. This will avoid contact between council officers and business operators and reduce the financial burden on business at this time. However you should be aware that this decision is subject to change at any time.

Unfortunately, although we can accept a new application, we are not in a position to process it at this time as we will be unable to carry out the inspection.

Q3. What if I am boarding an animal that has come from a COVID-19 infected household?

A. If an animal is taken from a COVID-19 infected household it should be wiped down with a pet safe disposable damp cloth and kept in isolation for 3 days, to ensure that it is not carrying the COVID-19 virus. Where appropriate dogs and cats could be bathed. Any equipment that comes with the animal should be thoroughly washed with soap and water and disinfected where appropriate.

Q4. Can animals carry COVID-19?

A. There's no evidence of COVID-19 in pets or other animals in the UK which suggests animals do not transmit the disease to humans, but it is thought it could possibly be transferred on the coat or fur of animals and on equipment associated with animals such as dog leads or horse saddles. The advice is to wash your hands regularly, including before and after contact with animals.

Q5. What if I'm ill, self-isolating or vulnerable?

A Then you must make arrangements for someone else to look after the animals in your care.

Q6. Can I collect an animal from my client's home?

A. You may transport animals from their home, so long as animals from one household are transported at one time and vehicles are given a thorough disinfection between household animals. Remember to ensure social distancing, and a cleansing routine - wash hands, disinfect equipment, clean the animal.

Q7. What about vaccinations?

A. Your licence conditions require the vaccination of animals before being accepted into the licensed premises anyway. Due to COVID-19 many vets are only undertaking emergency care, so people cannot get their animal vaccinations updated. However the council may be prepared to relax the condition during the COVID-19 pandemic, but you must ensure:

- 1) You undertake a **written risk assessment for the acceptance of non-vaccinated animals**
- 2) Animals are isolated (in your isolation facilities or in a separate kennel enclosure etc.) **from other animals at all times.**

If you cannot do this, you should not board the animal.

Q8. Is there anything else I can do to help?

A. Animal rescue and re-homing organisations may be under pressure from animals being abandoned and particularly if they have a stray dog contract with the local authority. Boarding establishments may also wish to offer space to them.

Licensed Dog Breeding

Q1. Can I still breed animals?

A. Dog breeders are not prohibited from trading under the current regulations, however you may be affected by COVID-19 restrictions, as travelling to buy an animal may not be one of the permitted reasons to leave home.

Q2. I have a litter of puppies, what should I do?

A. The law requires the mother to be seen with a puppy at the point of sale, however during the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for social distancing, video footage can be shared by the breeder of the offspring with their mother prior to the sale.

Q3. Can I deliver the puppy to the purchaser?

A. Where a breeder does undertake delivery and the journey is over 40 miles (65kms), it is considered that they will be caught by the rules relating to the Welfare of Animals in Transport EU Regulation 1/2005 and it is advised that they seek authorisation from the APHA Welfare of Animals in Transport Team.

It is strongly recommended that breeders do not plan to have any litters until the Covid-19 emergency is concluded.

Always use the Canine and Feline Sector Group (CFSG) dog handover protocol (see link below).

Pet Shops

Q1. Do we have to close our shop?

A You do not have to close, as you are providing food and equipment for the care of animals. The purchase of these provisions are one of the essential reasons people are permitted to leave home.

Q2. Can I still sell animals?

A. Nobody should visit a pet shop for the sole purpose of purchasing a new pet.

Riding schools

Q1. Do we have to close our premises?

A. These premises must close and must not offer riding to members of the public. Employees can still visit the premises to care for the animals, including riding them to give the animals exercise. Animals at Livery at these premises can also be attended by their owners or employees, following COVID-19 distancing advice.

Non-Licensed Businesses

Dog walking

Q1. Can I still offer a dog walking service?

A. Dog walking services may still be provided, subject to public health rules being maintained including social distancing. Only dogs from the same household should be walked together and any vehicle used to transport the dogs should be thoroughly disinfected between dogs.

Dog walkers should use gloves and change them between households. You are encouraged to minimise the touching of client's dogs at this time.

Find full guidelines you must follow when walking someone else's dog [here](#).

Dog Groomers

Q1. Can I still operate my business?

A. Members of the public cannot visit dog grooming salons as it is not a permitted reason to leave the house. However dog groomers can collect dogs from people's homes and take them back to their salon for grooming as long as animals from one household are transported at one time and vehicles are given a thorough disinfection between dogs.

Mobile dog groomers can still operate, subject to public health rules being maintained including social distancing.

Veterinary surgeries

Q1. Can vets still operate?

A. Veterinary surgeries do not have to close. You are permitted to travel to obtain emergency care from a vet for your animal. However many vets are only offering only emergency care at this time. You should contact your vet for advice prior to making a journey with your pet.

Further Advice for all businesses

[Canine and Feline Sector Group \(CFSG\)](#)

[Handover and pet service protocols:](#)