PET ANIMALS ACT 1951

STANDARD LICENSING CONDITIONS
FOR KEEPING PET SHOPS

WITH GUIDANCE

Public Protection Services
New Town House
Buttermarket Street
Warrington  WA1 2NH
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INTRODUCTION

The Pet Animals Act 1951 (as amended) does not allow for a pet shop to be kept without a Licence from the Local Authority and Licences are issued subject to conditions which are designed to secure the welfare of the animals kept by securing the following objectives laid down in the Act:

- that animals are kept in accommodation suitable in respect of size, temperature, lighting, ventilation and cleanliness;
- that animals are adequately supplied with suitable food and drink and are visited at suitable intervals;
- that animals are not sold at too early an age;
- that all reasonable precautions are taken to prevent the spread of infectious disease;
- that appropriate steps will be taken in the event of an emergency.

Keeping a pet shop means the carrying on at any premises of any nature (including a private dwelling) of a business of selling animals as pets. The provisions cover retailers selling pet livestock, wholesalers, dealers, importers and exporters.

Warrington Borough Council’s standard licensing conditions have been approved and adopted by the Council in the best interests of animal welfare and for improvement of pet shop management. They are based on recommendations of a working party consisting of the Local Government Association, British Veterinary Association, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, Pet Care Trust and Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association Ltd.

Your pet shop will need to comply with these licensing conditions as a basic minimum standard before a licence is granted. For ease of reference, the standard licensing conditions have been set out in the text under bold type headings/numbering, with the guidance notes adjacent in italics.

Unless otherwise stated, these conditions will apply to all buildings and areas to which livestock have access.

It is also important to consider the health and safety of staff and visiting members of the public, and what the legal requirements are regarding waste disposal, noise and odour nuisance. Further information on these matters may be obtained from the Council.
THE LICENSING PROCESS

Application for a Licence must be made on the appropriate form, giving all the information required together with the current fee.

Contact with Health & Safety Licensing should be made before building work begins to ensure that the design and construction meet the standard licence conditions.

An inspection of the pet shop will be carried out by an Environmental Health Officer for compliance with standard licence conditions. In certain circumstances, the Local Authority may authorise a veterinary surgeon or practitioner to inspect and their fees will also be payable.

If the Local Authority refuses to grant you a Licence you will be given notice in writing of the reasons. If you are aggrieved by the refusal or by any conditions, you can make representations to the Inspector’s line manager for a review and you can also appeal to a Magistrates’ Court.

A Licence will either come into force on the day it is granted and will remain in force until the end of the year or it will come into force at the beginning of the next following year and expire at the end of that year.

Inspections for Licence renewals are normally carried out during the last two months of the current licence period but unannounced visits may be made at any time during the year. Please note it is an offence for any condition to which a licence has been granted to be contravened or not complied with.
1 LICENCE DISPLAY

The Licence, or a copy of the Licence, should be suitably displayed to the public in a prominent position.

Notes: It is essential that customers and those responsible for premises management area aware of the licence conditions.

2 ACCOMMODATION

2.1 Animals must at all times be kept in accommodation and environment suitable to the species with respect to situation, size, temperature, lighting, ventilation and cleanliness and not exposed to draughts. All accommodation to be kept in good repair.

2.2 If animals are displayed outdoors, they must have protection appropriate to their species.

2.3 Housing must be constructed of non-porous material to be appropriately treated.

2.4 In order to control the spread of disease, and to prevent injury, animals must not be kept in such a way that they can be disturbed by other animals or the public.

2.5 All livestock for sale must be readily accessible and easy to inspect, with cages sited so that the floor of the cage is readily visible.

2.6 Accommodation must be cleaned as often as necessary to maintain good hygiene standards.

2.7 Where accommodation is on a tiered system, water, food or other droppings must not be allowed to enter the lower housing.

2.8 All accessories provided in the accommodation must be suitable for the species.

Notes: Application for building works may well require approval from the Building Control Division and/or Planning Department.

When designing accommodation, consideration should be given to using systems which would allow removal of the animals in the case of emergency. This provision would not usually apply to aquariums and ponds.

3 EXERCISE

3.1 Suitable and sufficient facilities must be available where appropriate.

For puppies, where required, a covered exercise area of at least 2.46sq metres (26sq ft) should be provided. Exercise areas should have a minimum height of 1.8m (6ft) to facilitate adequate access by staff for cleaning.

4 REGISTER OF ANIMALS

4.1 A livestock purchase register must be maintained for all livestock. A sales register must be maintained for:
- puppies;
- kittens;
- psittacines;
- species contained in the Schedule to the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 (as

The register can be by cross-reference to an invoice file. The purpose of the register is to ascertain the source of livestock and for emergency contact or purchaser. The name, address and telephone number of the purchaser should be obtained.
5 STOCKING NUMBERS AND DENSITIES

5.1 The maximum number of animals to be stocked on the premises will be governed by the accommodation available, as stated in the stocking density lists detailed in the schedules attached to these licence conditions. No other animals, other than those specified in the Licence, may be stocked without prior written approval from the Licensing Authority. These stocking densities are provided for guidance and recommendation only.

Schedule 1 Caged Birds
Schedule 2 Small Mammals
Schedule 3 Ornamental Fish
Schedule 4 Other Species

6 HEALTH, DISEASE AND ACCLIMATISATION

6.1 All stock for sale must be in good health and free from parasitic infestation as far as can be reasonably determined without veterinary inspection.

6.2 Any sick or injured animal must receive appropriate care and treatment without delay. Inexperienced staff must not treat sick animals unless under appropriate experienced supervision.

6.3 Facilities must be provided to isolate sick animals.

6.4 All animals must receive appropriate inoculations where required for the species, as advised by the Veterinary Surgeon. Veterinary advice must be sought whenever necessary.

6.5 Any animal with an obvious, significant abnormality, which would materially affect its quality of life, must not be offered for sale. When in doubt, veterinary advice should be sought.

6.6 All animals must be allowed a suitable acclimatisation period before sale.

6.7 All reasonable precautions must be taken to prevent the outbreak and spread of disease. No animal which is suffering from, or could reasonably be suspected of having come into contact with any other animal suffering from, any infectious or contagious disease, or which is infested with parasites, shall be bought into or kept on the premises unless effectively isolated.

6.8 Individual litters of puppies and kittens must be kept separate from other litters.

6.9 All necessary precautions must be taken to prevent the introduction to the premises, and harbourage of rodents, insects and other pests.

“Care and treatment” may include euthanasia, but under no circumstances may an animal be euthanised other than in a humane and effective manner. In case of doubt, veterinary advice must be sought.

For ornamental fish, in-line UV treatment or other sterilising devices effectively provide a means of isolating individual tanks in multiple tank systems. They must be of a proper size and maintained in accordance with manufacturers’ recommendations.

“Rodent” and “insect” excludes livestock for sale or for feeding
7 FOOD AND DRINK

7.1 Animals must be supplied with adequate amounts of food and drink, appropriate to their needs and at suitable intervals.

7.2 All food must be suitable for the species concerned.

7.3 Food and drink receptacles must be constructed and positioned to minimise faecal contamination and spillage.

7.4 A suitable and sufficient number of receptacles must be provided and cleaned at regular intervals.

8 FOOD STORAGE

8.1 All food, excluding live foods intended for feeding to livestock on the premises, must be stored in impervious, closed containers.

8.2 The containers and equipment used for feeding must be kept in a clean and sound condition.

9 OBSERVATION

9.1 All livestock must be attended to at regular intervals, at least once daily, appropriate to the species. It is recommended that a system of recording observation is maintained.

10 EXCRETA AND SOILED BEDDING

10.1 All excreta and soiled bedding must be kept in an hygienic manner and stored in impervious containers with close fitting lids – away from direct sunlight.

10.2 Excreta and soiled bedding must be removed from the premises on a regular basis, at least weekly, and disposed of to the satisfaction of the appropriate Local Authority and in accordance with current regulations and good waste management practice.

10.3 All containers must be kept in a clean condition.

11 TRANSPORTATION

11.1 When receiving stock, the licensee must make every effort to ensure that it is transported in a suitable manner. It is advisable (recommended) to record the registration number of vehicles transporting livestock.

For air transportation, the IATA Live Animals Regulations must be followed as a minimum legal standard.
11.2 Any livestock received or consigned shall be transported according to the regulations laid down in current legislation such as the Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 1997.

12 TRANSPORTATION CONTAINERS

12.1 Livestock must be transported or handed to purchasers in suitable containers.

13 SALE OF LIVESTOCK

13.1 No mammal shall be sold unweaned or, if weaned, at an age at which it should not have been weaned.

13.2 In the case of non-mammals, they must be capable of feeding themselves.

14 DANGEROUS WILD ANIMALS

14.1 When dangerous or wild animals are kept, the cages must be of a secure construction appropriate to the species. A fine wire mesh, glass or plastic safety barrier must be incorporated into the cage system.

14.2 The Local Authority should be notified in the event that the pet shop wishes to offer for sale, for the first time, any animal on the Schedule to the Dangerous Wild Animals Act. Although it is acknowledged that there is an exemption contained within the Act in relation to pet shops, it is recommended that consideration should be given to complying with any special requirement(s) specified in the Act for the safe accommodation or care of the animal.

14.3 Licensees selling animals on the Schedule to the Dangerous Wild Animals Act should inspect the purchaser’s Licence to keep such an animal and inform the issuing Authority of the details of the purchase.

15 PET CARE ADVICE

15.1 Pet care leaflets or other similar written instructions must be made available to customers free of charge at the time of purchase, in addition to any offer to purchase pet care books or leaflets.

15.2 Purchasers must be given proper advice on the care of the animal and, where necessary, on the maintenance and use of any accessories.

15.3 Appropriate reference materials must always be available for use by staff.

Further advice can be obtained from the organisations listed in Annex 1 at the back of this document.
16 STAFF TRAINING AND LIFESTOCK KNOWLEDGE

16.1 No animal should be stocked or sold unless the staff (or at least one member of staff) is familiar with the care and welfare of the animals stocked and has a recognised qualification or suitable experience.

16.2 In respect of any applications (not renewals), at least one member of staff working at the licensed premises should hold the City and Guilds Pet Store Management Certificate, or some other appropriate qualification; or must be in the course of training and can obtain the qualification within two years of the Licence being granted.

16.3 The Licensee must formulate a written training policy for all permanent staff and will be required to demonstrate that systematic training is carried out.

17 FIRE AND OTHER EMERGENCY PRECAUTIONS

17.1 Suitable emergency precautions and written procedures must exist and be made known to all staff, including arrangements for evacuation of livestock.

17.2 Entrances and exits must be clear of obstructions at all times.

17.3 Suitable fire fighting equipment must be provided, maintained, regularly serviced and sited as advised by the local Fire Protection/Prevention Officer and in consultation with the Local Authority.

17.4 The Licensee, or designated keyholder must, at all times be within reasonable distance of the premises and available to visit the premises in case of emergency.

17.5 A list of keyholders must be lodged with the local Police and with the Local Authority.

17.6 In the interests of animal welfare, the following notice must be displayed at the front of the shop: “In case of emergency, dial 999”. The number of the local Police station should also be displayed.

17.7 When pet shops are sited within other premises, the Licensee or keyholders must have access at all times to the premises containing the livestock.

17.8 All electrical installations and appliances must be maintained in a safe condition.

Further advice and guidance on training can be obtained from the organisations listed in Annex 1.

A general maxim of “people first” is good advice.

It is strongly recommended that smoke and residual current detectors or other similar devices are installed.

A reasonable distance would, in normal conditions, be interpreted as no more than 20 minutes travelling time.
FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

1 SALE OF LIVESTOCK

1.1 No animal should be sold to any person under the age of 16 years who is unknown to the retailer, unless that person is accompanied by a parent or legal guardian or provides appropriate written consent. Subsequent sales to a juvenile of less than 16 years, but over 12 years, who is know to the retailer, can be carried out in the absence of a parent or legal guardian or appropriate written consent, provided that the retailer is satisfied as far as possible that:

1.1.1 the parent/guardian would not object to the acquisition;

1.1.2 the juvenile is sufficiently knowledgeable to the needs, care and nature of the species acquired;

1.1.3 the juvenile’s intention towards the acquisition is consistent with the well-being of the animal concerned.

2 TRADE ASSOCIATIONS

2.1 Licensees are recommended to apply for membership of an appropriate trade association. These can be a useful source of advice on all matters relating to the running of a pet shop and the care and treatment of individual animals.

3 BOARDING ANIMALS

3.1 No pet shop should be used for the purpose of boarding any species of animals for which they are not licensed to sell. If it is intended to board cats and dogs, suitable and sufficient accommodation must be provided. Boarding of cats and dogs is subject to separate licences issued under the Animal Boarding Establishments Act.

4 CATEGORIES OF ANIMALS WHICH A PET SHOP MAY BE LICENSED TO KEEP

1 Dogs and cats (puppies and kittens)
2 Smaller domesticated mammals – eg rabbits, guinea pigs, gerbils, hamsters, rats, mice, chinchillas, chipmunks, ferrets
3 Larger domesticated mammals – eg goats, pot-bellied pigs
4 Primates – eg marmosets
5 Other mammals
6 Parrots, parakeets and macaws
7 Other birds
8 Reptiles
9 Amphibians
10 Fish and aquatic invertebrates
Other vertebrates
SCHEDULE 1 : STOCKING DENSITIES – CAGE BIRDS

No species of bird shall be housed in accommodation which does not afford that species sufficient space for natural free and full wing stretching and the number of birds housed shall be such that overcrowding does not significantly reduce that freedom. Long tailed birds or birds in full plumage must be provided with properly placed perches and feeding and watering points to prevent that plumage being fouled or otherwise damaged.

This refers to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 which should not be contravened (especially Section 8 of the Act).

For perching birds, a sufficient number of perches (as appropriate) must be provided at such a height that the bird can rest its head without its head touching the top, and its tail the bottom of the cage.

A quality padded net should be used when catching birds in an aviary.

Minimum floor areas apply to young stock. For adult stock offered for sale, the dimensions should be doubled. For advice on the age of stock, it is advisable to contact the veterinary surgeon.

SCHEDULE 2 : STOCKING DENSITIES - JUVENILE SMALL MAMMALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>No. of animals</th>
<th>1-4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>Min. Cage Height (cm)</th>
<th>Min. cage depth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mice, Hamsters, Gerbils</td>
<td>sq cm</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rats</td>
<td>sq cm</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>1010</td>
<td>1125</td>
<td>1235</td>
<td>1350</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea Pigs</td>
<td>sq cm</td>
<td>1350</td>
<td>1570</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>2250</td>
<td>2470</td>
<td>2700</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabbits up to 2 Kg, kittens, ferrets, chinchillas, chipmunks</td>
<td>sq cm</td>
<td>2250</td>
<td>2625</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>3375</td>
<td>3750</td>
<td>4125</td>
<td>4500</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puppies up to age of 12 weeks maximum</td>
<td>sq cm</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>12,500</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>17,500</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>22,500</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>50 Double height at shoulder minimum</td>
<td>0.9m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The range of behavioural opportunities for many of the animals listed in the above Schedule will be increased by enriching the environment with such accessories.

Raised shelving should be taken into consideration when assessing the total floor area.

Temporary (up to 6 days) rehousing of adult rabbits in smaller cages than specified above should be considered as acceptable.

The above recommended stocking densities are insufficient for the housing of marmosets. Marmosets must be housed in cages sufficiently large enough to allow for natural movement such as climbing and swinging.
SCHEDULE 3: STOCKING DENSITIES - ORNAMENTAL FISH

It is virtually impossible to determine the quantity of fish to be kept in a tank purely on a weight/volume or numbers of fish/volume.

The variation in system design, husbandry techniques and types of fish involved would render any such method too simple to be useful or too complicated to be practical.

The maintenance of water quality standards is essential and is a simple but effective way to determine stocking densities. Water quality testing should be carried out at least once a week in centralised systems and 10% of individual tanks should likewise be tested. Unsatisfactory test results must be recorded in a register together with the corrective action taken. Further tests must be carried out when visual inspection of the tanks indicates the need.

WATER QUALITY CRITERIA (1mg/litre – 1ppm)

Cold Water

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissolved Oxygen</td>
<td>-min</td>
<td>6mg/litre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Ammonia</td>
<td>-max</td>
<td>0.02mg/litre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitrite</td>
<td>-max</td>
<td>0.2mg/litre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitrate</td>
<td>-max</td>
<td>50mg/litre above ambient tap water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tropical Fish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissolved Oxygen</td>
<td>-min</td>
<td>6mg/litre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Ammonia</td>
<td>-max</td>
<td>0.02mg/litre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitrite</td>
<td>-max</td>
<td>0.2mg/litre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitrate</td>
<td>-max</td>
<td>50mg/litre. This is an absolute figure; it does not relate to ambient tap water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tropical Marine Species

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissolved Oxygen</td>
<td>-min</td>
<td>5.5mg/litre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Ammonia</td>
<td>-max</td>
<td>0.01mg/litre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitrite</td>
<td>-max</td>
<td>0.125mg/litre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nitrate</td>
<td>-max</td>
<td>40mg/litre. This is an absolute figure; it does not relate to ambient tap water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Min</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ph (tropical marine only)</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These parameters should be checked first. Only if a problem exists with these tests is it necessary to check nitrite and nitrate levels.
Further advice and guidance on water quality criteria can be obtained from the Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association Ltd (address can be found in your local library).

**SCHEDULE 4 : OTHER SPECIES**

Other species should be housed in accommodation appropriate to size, age and type of species; and to avoid overcrowding. There should be sufficient space for free and natural movement which should not be restricted by either the size of the accommodation or the number of animals in that holding. Correct temperature for the species must be obtained.

The advice and approval of the Licensing Authority should be sought wherever there is doubt about a species being sold.

**Annex 1**

**Names of Useful Organisations**

Further advice may be obtained from the organisations named below. For a current address, telephone number etc, please contact your local library.

The Local Government Association

The British Veterinary Association

The Pet Care Trust

Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association Ltd

British Small Animal Veterinary Association

Chartered Institute of Environmental Health

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Universities’ Federation of Animal Welfare

Environment Agency

Health and Safety Executive (information line)