

Is it okay to get help writing my procedures and creating my forms for a council licence?

While someone else can draft your documents, the responsibility for animal welfare and regulatory compliance remains entirely with you, the operator. Studying the guidance, forms, and procedures before an inspection is critical for the following reasons:



Demonstrating Personal Competence

Fit and Proper Person: The inspector must assess whether you are a "fit and proper person" to carry out the activity. If you cannot explain your own procedures, it suggests you may not be capable of meeting the licence conditions.

Specialist Knowledge: You are required to show specialist knowledge of the species in your care, including their mental and physical health, feeding, and environmental needs. Relying on someone else's words without understanding them makes it difficult to demonstrate this expertise.

Understanding Legislation: Inspectors evaluate your understanding of the relevant legislation and your role and responsibilities under it.

Contradicting written procedures: Describing a process (e.g., cleaning or feeding) that differs from what is written in your official procedures indicates a lack of strategic control.

Influencing Your Star Rating and Risk Level

Risk Assessment: New businesses are automatically considered "high risk". It is perfectly possible to achieve a 4-star rating on initial inspection if you can demonstrate a strong "appreciation of hazards or risks" and show that your welfare management procedures are fully implemented, not just written down. A low risk 5-star rating can be given at the second inspection, once you have two years of compliance history.

Document Implementation: Written procedures must be "clearly documented, implemented, and reviewed appropriately". If you aren't familiar with them, you won't be able to prove they are being followed in daily operations.



Staff Management and Safety

Staff Training: You must have training procedures in place, so your staff know exactly what is expected of them. As the licence holder, you are responsible for their supervision; you cannot effectively supervise or train staff on procedures you do not know yourself.

Emergency Preparedness: You must be able to explain protection measures for animals in cases of emergency, such as fire.

Blaming staff for errors: This shows a lack of supervision and leadership, suggesting that staff are unsupported or poorly trained.

PET BUSINESSES: PAPERWORK HELP FOR LICENCES

Avoiding Penalties and Delays

Incomplete Applications: Missing or misunderstood documents can delay your application.

Legal Consequences: Providing false or misleading information—even unintentionally by not knowing what is in your own forms—can lead to the suspension, variation, or revocation of your licence.

Obstruction: Failing to comply with an inspector's "reasonable request" due to a lack of procedural knowledge can be considered an offence.



How to Behave in an Inspection

To get the best result from an inspector, you want to come across as professional, transparent, and in control. Think of it as a collaborative "audit" rather than a confrontation.

Have a dedicated folder: Don't make them wait while you hunt for your emergency plan or vet records. Have a physical or digital folder ready with everything tabbed (e.g., Feeding, Cleaning, Training Logs, Insurance).

Know your numbers: Be ready to state exactly how many animals you have on-site and how many your licence allows.

Narrate your actions: As you move through the facility, explain *why* you do things. For example: *"We use this specific disinfectant because it's effective against parvovirus and is safe for the animals once dry."*

Show, don't just tell: If you mention an enrichment program, show the inspector the toys or the schedule on the wall. This proves the procedure is implemented, not just written.

Be honest about challenges: If a specific enclosure has a minor maintenance issue you're already fixing, point it out first. It shows you have a "high appreciation of hazards" and are proactive.

Stay calm: If they find a fault, don't get defensive. Note it down, ask exactly what is required to fix it, and provide a timeline for when it will be done.

Further Information

If you are not sure about writing your own procedures, I can help. My templates are designed to be edited and finished off by the licence holder, but if you are not confident putting actions into words - or are busy offering alternative services and have little time left at the end of the day, I can work with you to create a set of documents to get you started.

For further details, and to purchase the document templates mentioned in this Help Sheet please go to www.support4petbusiness.co.uk.

Sources

Article written by www.support4petbusiness.co.uk

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/animal-activities-licensing-guidance-for-local-authorities/dog-kennel-boarding-licensing-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities>