



Changes to Council Licensing Guidance as of 1st February 2022

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) issued on 1 February 22 updated guidance for local authority inspectors in England.

The ABRS+ have compared the updated guidance with that previously issued to determine what has changed. A summary of the amendments are provided below. These will be reflected in the ABRS+ advice documents that available to Members in the Resources area of the ABRS+ website.

The updated guidance has been re-written in a format and in English that is easier to read, follow and understand. The requirements that Riding Establishment have to meet are largely unchanged. The areas that have been changed include:

- The local authority is now mandated to carry out one unannounced inspection during the term of the license and does not need to be carried out at the same time as the annual listed vet inspection.
- If you use electronic records for your stable and equine management, you will need to demonstrate that these are routinely backed up.
- It explicitly states that if you have horses on the premises that are being used (hired-out) and are not declared on the license, this is a breach of the license (and especially if staffing levels are not increased).
- Induction training of staff must now also include animal behaviour (in addition to animal welfare and handling, cleanliness and hygiene, feeding and food preparation, disease prevention and control, recognition and first aid for animals).
- Staff who care for the horses must either hold a formal qualification, such as a Level 2 Ofqual regulated qualification appropriate for their role or show they have relevant and sufficient knowledge and experience. If no accredited training course exists that is appropriate to the activity, then other evidence of training must be provided, such as, industry generated courses. Individuals undertaking an Ofqual regulated qualification must have suitably progressed in 12 months and have completed the qualification within 2 years.
- The licensee (in addition to other staff) must undergo planned and continued professional development that address recognised knowledge gaps identified through an annual appraisal.
- Sleeping areas for horses must be large enough to allow all the animals housed to rest together fully outstretched, turn around unimpeded and move around comfortably.
- All horses must be checked to make sure they are clean and comfortable.
- Housing for horses must be capable of being thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, with procedures in place for the cleaning (as often as is necessary) of both housing and any equipment within it.
- Where there is a pest problem, a pest control programme must be put into place.
- When a horse is transported, the licence holder must demonstrate that it is in a suitable vehicle. Vehicles not have to be owned by the licence holder.
- Horses should not be transported in temperatures that could risk the horse's health.

- Buildings where horses are kept in stables or stalls require suitable firefighting, prevention and detection equipment. If the building is subject to building regulations it must have at least one working suitable fire detection system installed.
- There must be a plan for housing for the horses if the premises become uninhabitable - even if field-only provision is available.
- The licence holder must either have a formal qualification which is appropriate for the role they take in the licensable activity or be able to show experience which is sufficient for the role they take in the licensable activity.

The required and optional higher standards required to obtain an extended period license are unchanged.

The new guidance provides more explicit requirements for the training (both ongoing and continued professional development) and competence (through qualification and/or experience) of both the licensee and staff. In most other areas, the ABRS+ believes that members will already comply with the requirements of the updated guidance.