

Selling Animals as Pets Higher Standards

For each activity, a number of higher standards have been agreed. Meeting the higher standards is optional but is the only way to gain a higher star rating. The higher standards are classified in to two types: required and optional and are outlined in the relevant guidance documents for the activity in question. To distinguish required standards from optional ones they have each been given a specific colour which is used in each guidance document. Higher standards that appear in blue text are required, whereas those that appear in red text are optional. To qualify as meeting the higher standards, the business needs to achieve all of the required higher standards as well as a minimum of 50% of the optional higher standards. During an inspection, the inspector should assess whether or not the business meets the required number of higher standards.

Required:

- Businesses selling animals exclusively to other businesses must meet the requirements for cage sizes and stocking densities in the species-specific minimum standards.
- A documented health checklist should be completed daily and must cover physical, psychological, and behavioural issues and any abnormality recorded.

Optional: (50%)

- There must be a member of permanent, full-time staff with an Ofqual regulated Level 3 qualification that is appropriate to the species kept.

Part C- Selling Dogs

Required:

- There must be adequate staffing to undertake more regular checks than required by the minimum standard.
- The floor area must be at least 1.5 times larger than the minimum required.
- Dogs must be provided with a design and layout that provides them with choice. Separate areas for different activities should be provided. This can be achieved by, for example, inclusion of raised platforms.
- There must be a travel plan that sets out how animals are managed for long journeys over 4 hours.
- The last interaction session must take place within one hour before the end of the working day.

Optional:

- Ventilation must be a managed, fixed or portable air system to ensure appropriate temperatures are maintained in all weather. This can be an air conditioning unit or use of removable fans.
- A person that is competent in providing for the welfare of the animals must be on the premises at all times.
- There must be a routine monthly visit to check health and welfare by the veterinary practice and the veterinary record held.

Part D- Selling Cats

Required:

- There must be adequate staffing to undertake more frequent checks than required by the minimum standard.
- The floor area must be at least 1.5 times larger than the minimum required.
- Cats must be provided with a design and layout that provides them with choice. Separate areas for different activities should be provided. This can be achieved by, for example, including a choice of raised platforms or hiding places.
- A privacy area for cats where they are not visible to people or cats in neighbouring pens must be provided for toileting.
- Cats must have a feeding plan which splits meals into small portions throughout the day.
- Where the individual cat will benefit, they must every day be given some food through scatter feeding or other appropriate feeding device. Cats must still get the majority of their daily food allowance in a feeding dish. If this is not done the reason must be documented, for example, due to veterinary advice.
- A written programme must be available setting out a variety of enrichment both inside and outside, including training, grooming, socialisation and play.
- The last interaction session must take place within one hour of the end of the working day.

Optional:

- Ventilation must be a managed, fixed or portable air system to ensure appropriate temperatures are maintained in all weather. This can be an air conditioning unit or use of removable fans.

- A noise management plan must be in place (for example, physical barriers, cat unit design, location of noise producing equipment) with demonstration of effectiveness.
- There must be a routine monthly visit to check health and welfare by the veterinary practice and the veterinary record kept.
- A person that is competent in providing for the welfare of the animals must be on the premises at all times.

Part E- Rabbits

Required:

- Where rabbits are housed, they should have permanent access to a separate sleeping area.
- See the [higher standard minimum enclosure sizes](#) for rabbits that must be followed.
- Litter trays must be provided that are impermeable, easy to clean and disinfect or be disposable. Litter trays must be deep cleaned at least weekly.
- Containers must open from the top to facilitate removal of the animal. Containers must be lined with newspaper or bedding to absorb urine
- Hay must be provided in a hay receptacle or feeder at an appropriate height, which keeps it off the floor and reduces the risk of contamination of the hay.
- Foraged foods (that have been foraged in uncontaminated areas and correctly identified) must be fed to the rabbits. Commercially available dried forages including willow can also be used to supplement the diet and provide a low risk alternative to foraged foods.
- Dietary enrichment must be used. For example, nuggets can be scattered around the enclosure, fed in puzzle feeders or hidden in paper bags or cardboard tubes. Where puzzle feeders or dispensers are used, rabbits must be monitored to ensure they can access the food.

Optional:

- For open top cages, rabbits that are physically able to use platforms must be provided with access to a platform or multiple platforms. For closed top cages, rabbits must be able to access these easily and be able to sit on them fully without touching the cage roof.
- Care should be taken with open top enclosures to ensure sufficient height to prevent escapes or access by predators. If platforms are provided in closed top cages, rabbits must be able to access these easily and be able to sit on them fully without touching the cage roof.

- Rabbits must be provided with access to growing grass to graze on, which can be in planted grass trays. Alternatively, rabbits can be provided with 2 different types of hay.
- Water must be provided for rabbits in multiple bottles or bowls. During hot weather, both a bottle and a bowl must be provided (unless kittens are present, in which case only bottles are suitable).

Part F- Guinea Pigs

Required:

- Carriers must open from the top to facilitate removal of the animal. Carriers must be lined with newspaper or bedding to absorb urine
- Forage foods (that have been collected in uncontaminated areas and correctly identified) must be fed to the guinea pigs. Commercially available dried forages including willow can also be used to supplement the diet and provide a low risk alternative to foraged foods.
- Dietary enrichment must be used. For example, nuggets can be scattered around the enclosure, fed in puzzle feeders or hidden in paper bags or cardboard tubes. Where puzzle feeders or dispensers are used, guinea pigs must be monitored to ensure they can access the food.
- Where guinea pigs have to be housed singly they must be provided with extra sources of enrichment. A plan must be in place for singly housed guinea pigs.

Optional:

- Guinea pigs must be provided with access to growing grass to graze on. This can be achieved by placing planted grass trays in their exercise areas. There must be enough grass for all guinea pigs housed to graze simultaneously. Alternatively, guinea pigs can be provided with fresh vegetables high in vitamin C every day.

Part G- Ferrets

Required:

- Carriers must open from the top to facilitate removal of the animal, cardboard carriers are not advised as they are easily chewed and can become damp. Carriers can be lined with newspaper and some bedding material, for example, good quality dust-free hay or shredded paper can be provided for comfort.
- Dietary enrichment must be used. For example, nuggets can be scattered around the enclosure, fed in puzzle feeders or hidden in paper bags or cardboard tubes. Where puzzle feeders or dispensers are used, ferrets must be monitored to ensure they can access the food.

- Where ferrets have to be housed singly, they must be provided with extra sources of enrichment. A plan must be in place for all singly housed ferrets.

Optional:

- Treat foods must include cooked meat scraps and hard boiled eggs. Treats can be given in moderation and as appropriate to the individual ferret.

Part H-Domestic small rodents

Required:

- See the [minimum enclosure sizes](#) that must be followed.
- Light-reducing shelters for rats, mice and hamsters (such as, but not limited to, a box or red tinted acrylic) must be provided. However, these must be monitored daily for signs of chewing and removed or replaced as necessary.
- Small rodents must be provided with a choice of different nesting materials.
- After cleaning, some used unsoiled litter and nesting material must be transferred back to help keep scents familiar for the rodents.
- Where social species of small rodents have to be housed singly they must be provided with extra sources of enrichment. A plan must be in place for singly housed small rodents (only those of a social species).

Optional:

- Small rodents that are physically able to use platforms must be provided with access to a platform (singly housed) or multiple platforms. Animals must be able to access these easily and be able to sit (ideally stand) up on it fully without touching the cage roof.
- When work is occurring near, or nocturnal animals are checked at night, dim red light or dim white light must be used to minimise disturbance. Light level must be sufficient enough for observing or undertaking required tasks.

Part I- Other non- domestic species (mammals)

Required:

Optional:

- A written programme must be available setting out a variety of appropriate enrichment provided.

Part I- Birds

Required:

- The enclosure size must allow the bird to have variety and choice in its environment.
- Birds must be displayed for sale in aviaries that are 4 times the bird's flying wingspan or larger in size for length, depth and height for an individual bird and 20% increase for each successive bird for multiple occupancy.
- A variety of substrates, including a variety of perches for arboreal birds must be provided. Perches of a variable thickness and materials must be provided.
- Output of UVB bulbs must be monitored with a UV meter and recorded. Species specific requirements must be documented and available for inspection.
- Specialist nutritional advice must be sought where appropriate.
- Birds must not be housed or sold with their wings clipped. Wings are kept complete and flight is actively encouraged.
- All birds of prey, or other trained birds where appropriate, must have daily periods of flight; either in aviaries or flown outdoors by a competent person.
- Birds must not be removed from their parents (for 'hand rearing') until their eyes have been opened for more than one week to avoid risk of mal imprinting on humans as adult birds.
- Adult non-colonial birds must be managed in large flights, to allow birds space to escape from each other if required to prevent behavioural problems. Sufficient staff to manage the population must be provided as needed.

Optional:

- All cages must have direct access to a flight aviary.
- Furniture must be changed on a regular basis to provide novelty and enclosures designed to provide choice for the animals within.
- The licence holder must have signage identifying potentially aggressive birds including clearly labelled aviaries and cages.

Part K- Reptiles and amphibians

Required:

- The output of UVB lamps must be monitored with a UV meter and recorded on a weekly basis. Species specific requirements must be documented and available for inspection.

- Specific written protocols for the quarantine or prevention of release of chytridiomycosis and potentially other biological agents must be available for inspection where amphibians are maintained.
- For thermostatically stable vivaria, temperature assessment must be increased to 3 times weekly to document maximum and minimum temperatures.
- Where applicable, a minimum of 2 hides or sheltered areas must be provided and located in different areas of the thermogradient.
- A dedicated area of isolation or quarantine must be available with associated protocols and policies in place to ensure biosecurity of the premises.

Optional:

- Large established or permanent reptilian vivaria with water features must have water filtration systems to ensure hygiene is maintained.
- For species that require brumation, designated facilities must be available and a related policy regarding temperature and other husbandry requirements available for inspection.
- Suitable thermogradient, humidity and UVB index (where applicable) for the species must be displayed on each vivarium.
- Sizing of vivaria and associated environmental parameters must meet or exceed those outlined in the higher standards. Arboreal species require more height than terrestrial species and sizes, and must be adjusted accordingly. Vivarium height for arboreal species must increase to the length outlined above. The length of the vivarium can be reduced by one third.
- Moist, non-powdered nitrile gloves (or similar) must be used to handle amphibians.

Part L – Fish

Required:

- Water quality must be assessed 3 times weekly and records kept of test results. In instances when water quality parameters are not met, the remedial action taken to restore acceptable parameters should be recorded.
- There must be evidence that UV systems are maintained regularly.
- The business must have in place reasonable measures to prevent the import, outbreak and spread of disease. This must be demonstrated by implementation of a biosecurity plan.

Optional:

- A suitable temperature range for the fish must be displayed on each standalone system and on each centralised system.
- For premises with no natural light, there must be automated systems or procedures (or both) to ensure gradual change in light levels.

Required higher standards for buying and selling fish

Businesses must have:

- documented procedures that control and manage the buying and selling of fish
- internal controls in place to detect irregular transactions
- a well-maintained accounting system with a full audit trail