**Hiring out horses**

**Please read the full DEFRA Guidance notes for all conditions required for the hiring out of horses enclosed with this information.**

**Pre-inspection information**

**Veterinary Inspection(s)**

* All applications (New and Renewal) require a veterinary inspection from one of our appointed vets. The vet will carry out an inspection alongside one of our licensing officers and provide a written report as to the suitability of the premises and welfare conditions.
* An annual vet inspection is also required to assess the suitability of the horses to continue to work in the riding school once the licence has been issued. This is inspection will usually take place on the anniversary of the date of issue of the licence.

**Notes:**

* The Licence holder must hold an appropriate qualification or have sufficient demonstrable experience, in the management of horses
* As a minimum, in stables each horse should have sufficient room to lie down readily rise up and turn around in comfort. Roofs should be high enough to provide adequate ventilation including good air circulation. There should be a minimum clear space to the eaves of 60-90cm (2-3ft) above the ears of the horse in its normal standing position. All passage ways should be sufficiently wide to enable horses to be led safely passed other horses.
* Where stalls are used (i.e. an individual compartment enclosed on three sides), stall positioning and dimensions must allow room for the horse to lie down but not turn around and have sufficient space behind the stall for the horse to back out with ease.
* Doors should be a suitable width for the occupying horse and must be bolted top and bottom.
* The height of the door must allow the horse to look out with the head comfortably over the door unless it can be shown that there is a valid reason not to allow heads out.
* Doors must open outwards or through slide mechanism.
* Appropriate isolation, in separate self-contained facilities, must be available for the care of sick, injured or potentially infectious animals.
* There must be a preventative healthcare plan in place agreed with the appointed veterinarian or appointed veterinary practitioner.
* Where instruction riding is taking place there must be a safe riding area (e.g. arena or field) suitable for the activity for which it is being used
* Where staff are employed a separate hand wash basin with an adequate supply of hot and cold water must be provided for them to wash their hands.
* Active and effective environmental enrichment must be provided to the animals in inside and any outside environments.
* There must be a human and equine first aid kit available for client use and an accident reporting procedure which complies with the health and safety executive

**Procedures/policies required:**

* A written staff training policy (to include induction, annual appraisal, planned continued professional development, use of online courses and literature, should no staff be employed this should demonstrate the license holders own knowledge development. This must cover horse welfare, horse behaviour, horse handling, feeding and preparation, cleanliness and hygiene, disease prevention and control and recognition and treatment of sick/ injured animals.  **NB: Applicable only if staff are employed at the premises**
* A written record of training, knowledge and experience must be kept
* A cleaning and disinfecting procedure (to include isolation provisions and bio-security)
* A procedure covering transportation
* A procedure covering feeding
* A procedure covering the prevention of, and control of the spread of, disease (Including the Control of substances Hazardous to Health assessments for management of infectious diseases including coverage for zoonoses and use of Process Operation management Systems)
* A procedure covering the monitoring and ensuring the health and welfare of the animals
* A procedure covering the death or escape of an animal
* A procedure covering the care of animals following suspension/revocation of the licence or during and following an emergency
* Preventative Fire Risk Assessment that includes location map re access/egress for people and horses.
* A written emergency plan
* A preventative plan to cover grassland management and include information about, use of current anthelmintics (treatment of parasitic worms) alongside faecal egg counts where needed
* Documented system of recording observations for illness, injury or abnormal behaviour for each horse and any actions taken
* Processes must be in place to meet the needs of young and new horses including appropriate training and slow introduction to different noises and sights that will be part of their daily routine or workload.
* A policy must be in place for monitoring the introduction of new horses to existing groups.
* There must be a contingency plan for extremes of weather

**Records:**

* A plan/record of the type, quantity, frequency of food each horse receives must be kept.
* Body condition records of each horse
* Any medication given must be prescribed/recommended for the individual horse by a veterinarian, and each instance must be recorded.
* Records of POMs (Prescription only medications) administered must be recorded in horse passports by the veterinarian or owner where required.
* A record of all animals euthanased, the carcass disposal route and the identity of the individual that carried it out must be kept for 36 months.
* A record will be kept to demonstrate that each horse workload/regime is balanced to meet the needs of each individual horse including maximum weight of rider.
* There must be a register of all horses kept for the licensable activity on the premises and each horse’s valid passport showing its unique equine life number and microchip number (if any).
* A documented system of recording observation for illness, injury or behavioural problems must be maintained.

**Star ratings:**

As part of the new regulations each premises will receive a star rating following their formal inspection. In order to achieve the best star rating possible each premises will need to have covered all of the standard conditions and have all consents, policies and procedures in place.

In order to meet the highest possible rating for both the high and low risk categories in the rating matrix certain extra conditions will need to be met. The higher standards are classified in to two types: required and optional and are outlined below. 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

**REQUIRED HIGHER STANDARDS**

* There must be an option for a permanent individual turnout paddock or pen. This will give horses their own area for grazing or turnout if needed because of ill-health or domination by other horses.
* All horses must have a structured management and care programme to include their exercise needs. It should include suitable alternatives for those not able to exercise, such as extra grooming or physiotherapy.
* Each horse will have its own specific care plan detailing their age and any health related conditions.
* Records must show individual monitoring and training plans for horses with training needs to improve their use within a riding school. This must be accompanied with evidence of regular and effective checks with the saddler for comfort and fit.
* Initial assessments must be carried out for new riders. The details of the assessment must be recorded.
* A documented risk assessment must be available for all equipment. Examples include:
* Horse clippers
* Horse walker
* Yard blowers
* Arena levelling equipment
* Any extra therapy based machines or equipment
* A documented risk assessment must be available for activities, including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) needs. It must include the need for PPE for different tasks and situations.

**OPTIONAL HIGHER STANDARDS**

* There must be a separate secure, clean, and well-lit veterinary inspection area for safe access to inspect a horse.
* There must be a separate feed room that:
* Is purpose-built, well lit, and lockable
* Has water available and extra storage for supplements
* A competent person must be on site at all times.
* Records must show individual health plans and monitoring of the dietary needs of horses. Monthly body condition scoring must be recorded – if it is not optimum, advice must be sought from a vet or expert equine nutritionist. This advice must be documented.
* There must be a legible and up to date feed chart on display. It must show the correct feeding amounts for individual horses.

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| **Scoring**  **Matrix** | | **Welfare Standards** | | |
| **Minor Failings**  (existing business that are falling to meet minimum standards) | **Minimum Standards**  (as laid down in the schedules & guidance) | **Higher Standards**  (as laid down in the  guidance) |
| **Risk** | **Low Risk** | **1 Star**  1 yr. licence  Min 1 unannounced visit within 12 month period | **3 Star**  2 yr. licence  Min 1 unannounced visit within 12 month period | **5 Star**  3 yr. licence  Min 1 unannounced visit within 12 month period |
| **High Risk** | **1 Star**  1 yr. licence  Min 1 unannounced visit within 12 month period | **2 Star**  1 yr. licence  Min 1 unannounced visit within 12 month period | **4 Star**  2 yr. licence  Min 1 unannounced visit within 12 month period |