

Inspection readiness checklist

Home boarding for dogs in England

A practical prompt for gathering records, checking what can be produced on demand, and preparing useful questions for your licensing officer.

Use this as a preparation aid

This is not a complete statement of the law, not legal advice, and not a promise of a licence or star rating. Your licence conditions and local authority's assessment are decisive. Check the current statutory guidance and ask your licensing officer about local requirements.

How to use it

- [] Work through the record sections before the visit and note where evidence lives.
- [] Test that another authorised person can find and produce the records legibly.
- [] Walk the physical premises separately with your licence conditions in hand.
- [] Write down uncertainties and confirm them directly with your licensing officer.

1. Licence, website and operating scope

- [] A copy of the current licence is clearly displayed at the premises.
- [] The licence holder's name and licence number are prominent on every website used for the licensable activity.
- [] The activity, premises and maximum dog numbers match the current licence.
- [] Associated premises are listed and changes have been reported to the local authority where required.
- [] Resident dogs and other animals are included when checking the number that can reasonably be cared for.

2. Records, retention and backup

- [] Required records can be produced for an inspector in a visible and legible form without relying on one person's memory.
- [] Records are kept for at least 3 years from the date each record was created.
- [] Electronic records are backed up and the restore or export process has been tested.
- [] Corrections preserve the original record and show what changed, when and by whom.

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3. Register for every boarded dog

Pick one recent stay and follow it end to end. The test is not whether the information exists somewhere, but whether it can be found and handed over quickly.

- ☐ Arrival and departure dates are recorded.
- ☐ Name, age, sex, neuter status, microchip number and breed or description are recorded.
- ☐ Dogs from the same household are identified and the number from that household is recorded.
- ☐ Owner name, postal address, telephone number, email and emergency contact details are recorded.
- ☐ A separate local emergency contact is recorded for each dog.
- ☐ Normal vet name and contact details, including out-of-hours details, are available.
- ☐ Pet insurance details, where applicable, are recorded.
- ☐ Relevant medical and behavioural history, parasite treatment and exercise restrictions are recorded.
- ☐ Diet and feeding requirements are recorded.
- ☐ Current medical treatment, vaccination dates, worming dates and flea-treatment dates are recorded.
- ☐ The related consent records can be found from the dog's register entry.

4. Vet and medication arrangements

- ☐ The business is registered with a vet with suitable animal health and welfare experience.
- ☐ Vet name, address, telephone number and out-of-hours number are visible to staff.
- ☐ The owner and licence holder's agreed choice of vet is recorded for each dog.
- ☐ Owner consent and veterinary directions are available before treatment is given.
- ☐ Prescribed medicines are stored securely, at the correct temperature and used as directed.
- ☐ Medicine administration records show the dog, medicine, dose, time, person and whether it was given.
- ☐ Unused medication can be returned to the owner or prescribing vet.

Medication records

The statutory register includes details of treatment a dog is receiving. A clear administration log is also a practical way to evidence that instructions were followed and a missed dose was noticed.

5. Daily welfare and care evidence

- ☐ Every dog is checked at least daily, and vulnerable dogs are checked more often where needed.
- ☐ Pain, suffering, injury, disease or abnormal behaviour is recorded and acted upon.
- ☐ Advice from a vet, and the action taken after that advice, can be evidenced.
- ☐ Urine and faeces are monitored daily; anything unusual is recorded and acted upon.
- ☐ Feeding, drinking, exercise, enrichment and welfare checks can be traced to the dog and date.
- ☐ Care records identify the staff member who made them.
- ☐ Records continue to work when the normal signal, device or staff member is unavailable.

6. Consent, compatibility and admission

- ☐ Written consent is held before dogs from different households share a designated room.
- ☐ Each dog or same-household group has a designated room and can be separated if needed.
- ☐ In-season bitches are not accepted with dogs from other households, and entire males are excluded when applicable.
- ☐ Behaviour, bite history, health, diet and exercise restrictions are reviewed before admission.
- ☐ Vaccination and preventative treatment evidence is reviewed against the business policy and licence conditions.
- ☐ Any trial or familiarisation required by the licence or business policy is recorded.
- ☐ Crate use, shared accommodation, transport, off-lead exercise, vet treatment and other relevant consents are separate and traceable.

7. Incidents and emergencies

- ☐ A written emergency plan is current, premises-specific and known to everyone responsible for dogs.
- ☐ Emergency contacts, alternative accommodation, transport and evacuation arrangements are current.
- ☐ Incident records capture time, location, dogs and staff involved, what happened and immediate action.
- ☐ Vet contact, medical attention, owner notification, outcome and preventative steps are recorded.
- ☐ Escape, death and euthanasia records contain the additional facts required by the circumstances.
- ☐ Relevant attachments and follow-up actions stay linked to the incident record.

8. Premises and people - inspect physically

Software can organise evidence, but it cannot inspect a room, gate, fence, temperature or staff interaction. Walk the premises with the current licence and guidance.

- ☐ The home, secure outside area, barriers, designated rooms and separation arrangements match the licence conditions.
- ☐ Temperature, ventilation, lighting, cleanliness, maintenance and hazard controls are checked in person.
- ☐ Cleaning products, medicines, food and equipment are stored and used safely.
- ☐ Dogs have safe rest, sleeping, toileting, exercise and enrichment arrangements suited to their individual needs.
- ☐ Children, resident animals, visitors and staff interactions are covered by current risk controls.
- ☐ Staff competence, induction, training evidence, appraisals and annual training-policy review are current.

9. Higher standards - discuss your target

- ☐ You know which higher standards are required and which are optional for your activity.
- ☐ Evidence exists for every required higher standard you intend to meet.
- ☐ At least half of the optional higher standards are evidenced if seeking the higher-standard band.
- ☐ Written daily exercise regimes and alternatives for dogs under veterinary restriction are current where applicable.
- ☐ Overnight trial stays for longer stays are recorded where the higher-standard condition applies.
- ☐ Any star rating shown publicly is described as awarded by the local authority.

Questions for your licensing officer

- ☐ Which local licence conditions or evidence requests go beyond the national guidance?
- ☐ Which records would you expect to see first on inspection day?
- ☐ Which higher standards are relevant to this premises and operating model?
- ☐ How should unusual arrangements or premises changes be agreed and recorded?

Your next actions

Use this page for the gaps, questions and owners you identify while working through the checklist.

Current sources

GOV.UK home boarding for dogs statutory guidance (updated 1 June 2026), read alongside the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018.

DogBoarder organises operational records and helps show what is present or missing. It is decision support, not legal advice, and cannot guarantee a licensing outcome. Requirements and licence conditions differ between local authorities and premises.

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