



The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018

Hiring out Horses

Pre-inspection document

This document highlights the written policies, procedures and records that are required to meet the minimum conditions.

Overview: Hiring out Horses

A business or person involved in hiring out horses for riding or instruction in riding as a commercial business require a licence. This includes riding schools, loan horses, hacking, hunter hirelings, pony trekking, polo instruction, and pony and donkey rides.

Activities that are carried out solely for military or police purposes and riding stables that are used solely for instructing university veterinary students do not require a licence.

The licence holder must:

- Hold an appropriate formal qualification, or have sufficient demonstratable experience, in the management of horses
- Hold a valid certificate of public insurance

No person under the age of 18 years can be left in charge, including managing the facility and dealing with clients. A person who has hired out horse must be supervised by a person aged 16 years or more, unless the licence holder is satisfied that the person hiring the horse is competent to ride without supervision.

A listed vet is required to carry out the initial and subsequent renewal inspections. Annual horse checks are also required to be carried out after the first year (if a two-year licence is granted) and after the second year (if a three-year licence is granted).

During the initial, renewal and annual horse check inspections each horse to be used for the activity will be inspected by the listed vet. A semi dark area stable must be available to allow the vet to inspect eye and heart function. A level firm surface for trotting up must also be available to allow the vet to observe any signs of lameness.

Only horses specified on the list of horses appended to the licence may be used for the licensable activity. The granted licence conditions will state the name, UELN and microchip number of all horses at the premises used for the activity.

Any changes to the list of horses must be notified to the local authority by the licence holder; with evidence that a veterinarian has deemed any new horse as fit for the purpose. The licence holder needs to apply to the local authority to vary the licence.

The local authority is also required to carry out one unannounced mid-licence inspection during the term of the licence. The intention of the mid-licence inspections is to confirm ongoing compliance with the animal welfare requirements of the regulations.

The guidance for the activity of hiring out horses can be viewed here:

[Hiring out horses licensing: statutory guidance for local authorities - GOV.UK](#)

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NOTE: IF ANY MINOR FAILINGS ARE IDENTIFIED DURING YOUR INSPECTION, YOU **MAY** BE GIVEN A 2 WEEK PERIOD TO PRODUCE SUPPORTING EVIDENCE AND DOCUMENTATION BEFORE YOUR REPORT IS SENT TO YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY.
IF THESE MINOR FAILINGS ARE NOT ADDRESSED DURING THIS 2 WEEK PERIOD, THEN THIS WILL RESULT IN A 1 STAR 1 YEAR LICENCE BEING ISSUED IF YOU ARE AN EXISTING BUSINESS OR THE LICENCE BEING REFUSED IF YOU ARE A NEW BUSINESS.

List of required written procedures for Hiring out Horses

The written procedures are your way of demonstrating to us that your business is operated in accordance with the conditions laid out in the guidance with regards to maintaining high standards of animal welfare.

Procedure	Condition	What the guidance states
<p><u>Staff training policy</u></p> <p>If you have staff, your training policy could include your standard operating procedures which will cover the training for a new member of staff.</p> <p>Your training policy needs to also include annual appraisals, how staff keep their knowledge up to date and relevant (this is what we refer to as continuous professional development or CPD) and any training courses that have been completed.</p> <p>Even if you have no staff, you as the licence holder are expected to keep a log of all continuous professional development or CPD. This could be a record of training courses, online research, reading books, keeping up to date with any research or</p>	<p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p>	<p>The licence holder or a designated manager and any staff employed to care for the animals must have competence to identify the normal behaviour of the species for which they are caring and to recognise signs of, and take appropriate measures to mitigate or prevent, pain, suffering, injury, disease or abnormal behaviour.</p> <p>Staff who care for the horses must either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hold a formal qualification, such as a Level 2 Ofqual regulated qualification appropriate for their role • show they have relevant and sufficient knowledge and experience <p>The licence holder must provide and ensure the implementation of a written training policy for all staff.</p>



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<p>developments with regards to equine health, behaviour and welfare.</p>		<p>The staff training policy must be reviewed and updated each year.</p> <p>It must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an annual appraisal • planned and continued professional development • recognition of knowledge gaps <p>This applies to all staff including the licence holder.</p> <p>Training can be demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engagement with online courses • annual appraisal documents <p>Evidence of staff attendance or completion of the training must be provided.</p> <p>10.1 All new members of staff must have this fire awareness as part of their induction programme.</p>
<p><u>DEFRA Authorisation Type 1 or 2 / certificates of competence / Animal Transport Certificate</u></p> <p>A transporter is anyone who transports animals in connection with an economic activity.</p> <p>Transporting animals in Great Britain - GOV.UK</p> <p><u>DEFRA Transporter Authorisation Type 1 or 2</u> - required for all businesses which move animals more than 65km as part of an economic activity. There are two types of Transporter Authorisation:</p> <p>“short journey” authorisation (Type 1) is required for journeys over 65km which last no more than 8 hours</p> <p>“long journey” authorisation (Type 2) is required for journeys that are over 8 hours duration</p>	<p>5.6</p>	<p>The animals must be transported and handled in a manner (including for example in relation to housing, temperature, ventilation and frequency) that protects them from pain, suffering, injury and disease.</p> <p>All animals must be transported according to the regulations laid down in current legislation (The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006).</p> <p>The licence holder must demonstrate that when a horse is transported, it is in a suitable vehicle. It does not have to be owned by the licence holder.</p> <p>Horses must not be left unattended in a vehicle if it's unsafe to do so. Time in a vehicle must be minimised.</p>



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<p><u>Certificate of Competence</u></p> <p>Transporters using road vehicles to transport equine on journeys over 65km in connection with an economic activity are required to undertake an assessment and obtain a Certificate of Competence.</p> <p><u>Animal transport certificate – if you transport animals, you must have a written record which confirms:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • origin and ownership • place of departure • date and time of departure • intended place of destination • expected duration of the intended journey <p>For local journeys up to 65km and under 8 hours only the Animal Transport Certificate is required</p>		<p>Horses should not be transported in temperatures that could risk the horse's health.</p>
<p><u>New and young horse policy</u></p> <p>For this policy you could describe how you introduce schooling, lifting hooves for picking and cleaning, loading and unloading from a trailer, desensitisation to different noises and sounds etc</p>	<p align="center">7.5</p>	<p>All immature animals must be given suitable and adequate opportunities to:</p> <p>(a) learn how to interact with people, their own species and other animals where such interaction benefits their welfare</p> <p>(b) become habituated to noises, objects and activities in their environment</p> <p>Processes must be in place to meet the needs of new and young horses.</p> <p>This must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate training • slow introduction to different noises and sights that will be part of their daily routine or workload
<p><u>Monitoring the introduction of new horses</u></p>	<p align="center">8.2</p>	<p>The animals must be kept separately or in suitable compatible social groups appropriate to the species and</p>



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<p>Tell us how you would introduce a new horse to an established herd (this includes two horses living together). You could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -allowing new horse to interact with others in an adjacent field or stable for the first couple of days -remove hind shoes when horses are turned out together -what measures you take to minimise conflict over resources 		<p>individual animals. No animals from a social species may be isolated or separated from others of their species for any longer than is necessary.</p> <p>Horses are usually best kept in social groups. If a horse must be separated from the social group it should still have sight of other horses, if possible.</p> <p>A policy must be in place for monitoring the introduction of new horses to existing groups. This will help avoid stress to either new or resident animals.</p>
<p><u>Written standard operating procedures</u></p> <p>Your written procedures are very much a guide to how your business operates and you should aim to provide at least a paragraph of text for each procedure.</p> <p>For example, for feeding: tell us the quantity, frequency and type of food each horse is given. Where is food stored? What receptacles are used? How are new feeds introduced?</p> <p>For cleaning: describe how good hygiene standards are maintained. Describe how stables are cleaned (daily and between periods of occupation)</p> <p>For transport: how will horses be transported? Describe what vehicle would be used. It does not have to be owned by the licence holder. How long would normal journeys be? You need to demonstrate that time in the vehicle will be minimised.</p>	<p align="center">9.1</p>	<p>Written procedures must:</p> <p>(a) be in place and implemented covering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) feeding regimes (ii) cleaning regimes (iii) transportation (iv) the prevention and control of the spread of disease (v) monitoring and ensuring the health and welfare of all the animals (vi) the death or escape of an animal (including the storage of carcasses) <p>(b) be in place covering the care of the animals following the suspension or revocation of the licence or during and following an emergency</p>
<p><u>Biosecurity plan</u> – including how a horse will be isolated for up to 21 days</p>	<p align="center">9.3</p>	<p>Appropriate isolation, in separate self-contained facilities, must be available</p>

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<p>Biosecurity refers to practices that can be put in place to reduce the likelihood of disease introduction and spread. It's crucial to always maintain these practices, and not just in the event of a disease outbreak. The plan needs to safeguard the health of horses on site</p>		<p>for the care of sick, injured or potentially infectious animals.</p> <p>There must be adequate isolation facilities for animals with infectious diseases. This may be on-site or at another location, such as a local veterinary practice.</p> <p>The licence holder must have a biosecurity plan agreed with a vet. This must include the ability to isolate a horse for up to 21 days.</p>
<p><u>Preventive health care plan</u></p> <p>The plan is to include annual vaccinations, grassland management and treatment of internal and external parasitic worms. The plan must be in agreement with the nominated vet</p>	<p>9.4</p> <p>9.7</p>	<p>All reasonable precautions must be taken to prevent and control the spread among animals and people of infectious disease, pathogens and parasites.</p> <p>Procedures must be in place to prevent the introduction of infectious disease and spread from any infected animals. All staff must understand the procedures.</p> <p>If there is evidence of external parasites, such as fleas, ticks, lice or mites, treat the horse according to best practice. Use a product authorised by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate where necessary. Records of treatment must be kept.</p> <p>A preventative plan must be in place and include information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective grassland management • use of current anthelmintics (treatment of parasitic worms) alongside faecal egg counts where needed <p>Routine and documented treatment must be in place for internal and external parasites.</p> <p>A homoeopathic vaccination is not an acceptable form of preventative</p>



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	6.2	<p>treatment. Vaccinations must only be administered by a vet.</p> <p>A vaccination plan must consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• biosecurity• horse travel movements <p>There must be a preventative healthcare plan in place agreed with the appointed vet or appointed veterinary practitioner.</p> <p>The health plan must show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the measures taken to prevent and control disease• any medication or treatments for each horse
<p><u>Emergency plan</u></p> <p>Your emergency plan should be one to two sides of A4 and cover all the requirements stated within the guidance including fire and evacuation, release of entrapped horses, where horses would go if premises became uninhabitable and contingency plan for extremes of weather such as flooding</p>	<p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p>	<p>A written emergency plan, acceptable to the local authority, must be in place, known and available to all the people on the premises used for the licensable activity, and followed where necessary to ensure appropriate steps are taken to protect all the people and animals on the premises in case of fire or in case of breakdowns for essential heating, ventilation and aeration or filtration systems or other emergencies.</p> <p>There must be awareness about the risk of entrapment of horses and the procedures to release them.</p> <p>All new members of staff must have this fire awareness as part of their induction programme.</p> <p>There must be a plan for housing for the horses if the premises become uninhabitable - even if field-only provision is available. There must also be contingency planning for extreme weather.</p> <p>The plan must include details of the emergency measures to be taken for the extrication of the animals should the premises become uninhabitable and an</p>



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		emergency telephone list that includes the fire service and police.
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Records to be kept by operator and will be checked during inspections

All records must be available to view at inspections. Records must be retained for three years. Electronic records must be backed up.

Condition	Details of what to record
Part A 4.3	Staff training records (records of courses, written or online learning, keeping up to date with any research or developments and annual appraisals)
Part A 5.9	The licence holder must have a system to record observations of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• illness• injury• behavioural problems
Part A 6.1	There must be a plan or record of the quantity, frequency and type of food each horse is given.
Part A 6.2	Feed and (where appropriate) water intake must be monitored, and any problems recorded and addressed. The body condition of every horse must be monitored on a regular basis.
Part A 7.3	The behaviour of individual horses must be monitored daily. Any changes in behaviours that suggest stress, fear, pain or anxiety must be recorded and acted upon.
Part A 9.4	If there is evidence of external parasites, such as fleas, ticks, lice or mites, treat the horse according to best practice. Use a product authorised by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate where necessary. Records of treatment must be kept.
Part A 9.7	Routine and documented treatment must be in place for internal and external parasites. A vaccination plan must consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• biosecurity• horse travel movements
Part A 9.9	Any medication given must be prescribed or recommended for the individual horse by a vet. It must be recorded in each instance. Records of prescribed only medications given must be recorded in horse passports by the vet or owner where required.
Part A 9.12	A record of all animals that have been euthanised must be kept for 36 months. It must include the name of the person who euthanised the animal and how the carcass was disposed of
Part A 9.14	Any signs of pain, suffering, injury, disease or abnormal behaviour must be recorded and the advice and further advice (if necessary) of a vet must be sought and followed.
Part A 10.1	Emergency drills must be carried out at least annually and recorded
Part B 6.1	All horses must have a structured management and care programme set out on an annual calendar or diary. It must include information about: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• foot care• worming



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• veterinary care
Part B 6.3 & 6.4	<p>A daily record of the workload of each horse must be maintained – it will set out hours of work that each horse has carried out</p> <p>The records will show the maximum weight of a rider for each horse.</p>
Part B 6.6	<p>If shod, their shoes must be properly fitted by a registered farrier. The frequency of trimming and shoeing for each horse must be recorded and available for inspection.</p>
Part B 6.9	<p>The licence holder must keep 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.</p>
Part B 7.1	<p>There must be clearly documented records of regular safety checks of riding hats provided by the facility.</p> <p>Rider registration forms must be completed and kept up to date. They must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- emergency contact details- client health conditions



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Star ratings:

As part of the Regulations each premises will receive a star rating following their formal inspection. To achieve the best star rating possible each premises will need to have covered all the minimum conditions and have all records, policies and procedures in place.

New businesses are automatically classed as high risk as there is no compliance history. New businesses are also not permitted to have any minor failings, therefore if any of the minimum conditions aren't met then a licence will not be issued.

Existing businesses may be categorised as low risk at the renewal inspection.

Scoring Matrix		Welfare Standards		
		Minor Failings (existing business that are failing to meet minimum standards)	Minimum Standards (as laid down in the schedules and guidance)	Higher Standards (as laid down in the guidance)
Risk	Low Risk	1 Star 1yr licence Min 1 unannounced visit within 12 month period	3 Star 2yr licence Min 1 unannounced visit within 24 month period	5 Star 3yr licence Min 1 unannounced visit within 36 month period
	Higher Risk	1 Star 1yr licence Min 1 unannounced visit within 12 month period	2 Star 1yr licence Min 1 unannounced visit within 12 month period	4 Star 2yr licence Min 1 unannounced visit within 24 month period

The local authority is also required to carry out one unannounced mid-licence inspection during the term of the licence. The intention of the mid-licence inspections is to confirm ongoing compliance with the animal welfare requirements of the regulations.

Higher standards for hiring out horses

Higher standards have been agreed for each licensable animal activity. It is optional to meet these. Meeting the higher standards is the only way to gain a 4- or 5-star rating. If you would like to qualify for the higher standards, your business must meet:

- All the minimum conditions
- 100% of the higher standards classified as required



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- 50% (or more) of the higher standards classified as optional

Required higher standards (all to be met)
There must be an option for a permanent individual turn out paddock/pen to allow horses their own area for grazing/turnout if required owing to ill-health or domination by other horses.
Horses must be inspected at least once during the out of hours period (e.g. 1800-0800).
All horses must have a structured management and care programme to include their exercise needs with suitable alternatives for those unable to exercise, such as additional grooming, physiotherapy etc.
Each horse will have its own specific care plan detailing age and any health related conditions.
Records must evidence individual monitoring and training plans for horses in connection with individual training needs to complement their use within a riding school. This must be accompanied with evidence of regular and effective checks with saddler for comfort and fit.
Initial assessments must be undertaken for new riders and details of assessment recorded.
Documented risk assessment must be available for all such equipment, for example horse clippers, horse walker, yard blowers, arena levelling equipment and any additional therapy based machines or equipment.
Documented risk assessment must be available for activities, including PPE requirements that include appropriateness of PPE relative to differing tasks and situations.
Optional higher standards (50% to be met)
Horses will not be in reach of each other to bite and there will be room to work around them. Horses will be in view of each other, unless kept singly for management reasons, such as isolation or stallion management purposes.
There must be a separate secure, clean and well lit veterinary inspection area that enables safe access to allow inspection of a horse.
There must be separate well lit, lockable, purpose built feed room with water available and additional storage for supplements.
A competent person must be on site at all times.
Independent specialist nutritional advice must be sought as appropriate for individual horses and documented alongside the weekly body condition scoring. Records must evidence individual health plans and monitoring for horses in connection with dietary requirements. There must be legible and up to date feed chart on display that informs correct feeding amounts for individual horses.



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Final checklist before your inspection

Once you apply for a licence you are telling the Council that you are ready to start hiring out horses. You are therefore saying that your premises is suitable and compliant with the legislation and statutory guidance and that you have all the necessary paperwork in place. If you do not have the necessary paperwork in place, then your application may be refused, and you will need to re-apply when you are ready.

This final checklist is not an exhaustive list of everything within the guidance but has been created to help you prepare and covers the minimum requirements. Please ensure you have all the following in place and ready to check during the inspection:

Summary	What you need to have available	✓
Staff training 4.2 & 4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training certificates licence holder and any staff employed hold • Evidence of continuous professional development (CPD log) for licence holder and any staff employed • Evidence of documented annual appraisals 	
Environment 5.1, 5.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All facilities used for accommodating horses must be in a good state of repair and well maintained. • There must be no sharp edges, projections rough edges or other hazards which present risk of injury to a horse • Stables must be large enough to allow a horse to lie down, stand up and turn around in comfort. • Stables must have adequate bedding and a non-slip floor • Fields must be safe and securely fenced and free of dangerous objects and poisonous plants and weeds • Riding areas (arena or field) must be well maintained with clear access and secure to prevent escape. • All horses must have access to shelter; in fields this can be purpose built or natural cover from trees and hedges. • A dung management programme for fields used for grazing must be in place to create effective parasite control and improve grass recovery • Standing water must not be allowed to build up because of the possibility of pathogens and biting flies. 	
Transport 5.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If own horse box / trailer is to be used ensure it's in a clean condition and well maintained. 	
Food storage / water provision / feeding 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 5.1, 5.2 & 5.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labelled feed bins in use. Stored feed kept off floor • Feed must be stored away from risk of vermin and kept in cool and dry places • Feed and drinking receptacles must be capable of being cleaned and disinfected • Automatic water bowls and troughs must be routinely cleaned and checked • Horses in stables must always have access to their own water. 	



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If horses are kept at grass, they must have adequate pasture. If this is not possible alternative forage such as hay or haylage must be provided. There should be one feeding site per horse plus an extra one. The premises must have the ability to isolate an individual horse to check if it is eating when in a group managed situation. 	
Hygiene 6.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hot water, soap and hygienic hand drying facilities must be available 	
Enrichment 7.1 & 7.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercise and / or field time is part of enrichment. Keeping horses permanently stabled or without exercise must be avoided. If it is necessary for veterinary purposes, then thought must be given to enrichment in the form of feeding mechanisms and grooming. 	
Written policies and procedures 4.2, 7.5, 8.2, 9.1, 9.3, 9.4, 10.1 & 10.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All the procedures listed on pages 2 – 8 need to be available to view 	
Appropriate isolation 9.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There must be adequate isolation facilities for horses with infectious diseases. This may be on-site or at another location, such as a local veterinary practice. Protective clothing and footwear (latex gloves, coveralls) must be available. Separate equipment and receptacles 	
Storage of excreta and soiled bedding 9.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The muck heap should be located at least 10 metres away from any stables. The muck heap must be removed from the site at regular intervals. Siting and storage of any muck heap must follow environmental legislation and avoid contamination of waterways 	
Vet's details displayed 9.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration required with an equine veterinary practice The vet's details must be displayed where they can be easily seen by all staff members. This must include name of vet, address, telephone number and out of hours telephone number 	
Medication 9.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prescription only medication must be kept in a lockable container and have a nominated responsible person to act as a key holder 	
Cleaning products 9.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Products for cleaning must be available that are effective against pathogens Cleaning products must be kept out of reach of horses 	
Emergencies 10.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suitable firefighting equipment (such as regularly serviced fire extinguishers), prevention and detection equipment must be provided and maintained in good working order Accessible human and equine first aid kit on site 	



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portable human first aid kit available for use off site • List of staff qualified in first aid to be displayed on site • Signage to be displayed, clearly and prominently, at the premises. Signage to state: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The full name, postal address and telephone number of licence holder or manager - Action to be taken in the event of fire or other emergency - Entrances and fire exits must be kept clear of obstruction 	
Insurance 2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of public liability insurance must be displayed 	
Tack and associated equipment 6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tack to be checked regularly to ensure they are safe, in a good state of repair and fit the horse correctly • Riding hats must meet current safety standards • Jumps and equipment used in riding must be fit for purpose and checked before use. 	
Dentist and farrier visits 6.1 & 6.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horses must have a dental check at least once a year by a vet or someone qualified • Each horse's hooves should be trimmed as often as is necessary to maintain the health, good shape and soundness of its feet and its shoes should be properly fitted and in good condition. 	
Suitable area for vet inspection 6.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This includes a semi dark stable and a level firm surfaced trotting up area 	
Passports 6.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passports for each horse to be used for the activity to be available to view 	
	For renewals	
Licence display 1.1 & 1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your licence must be clearly and prominently displayed • Name of licence holder and licence number must be clearly stated on your website / social media page (if you have one in use) 	
Records 4.3, 5.9, 6.1, 6.2, 7.3, 9.4, 9.7, 9.9, 9.12, 9.14, 10.1, 6.1, 6.3, 6.4, 6.6, 6.9, 7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All your records (listed on pages 9 - 10) must be available to view during the inspection. 	

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IF THESE MINOR FAILINGS ARE NOT ADDRESSED DURING THIS TWO-WEEK PERIOD, THEN THIS MAY RESULT IN A 1 STAR 1 YEAR LICENCE BEING ISSUED IF YOU ARE AN EXISTING BUSINESS OR THE LICENCE BEING REFUSED IF YOU ARE A NEW BUSINESS.