

The Animal Welfare (Primate Licences) (England) Regulations 2024

Pre-Inspection document

This document provides an overview of the primate licence and the enclosure requirements. It also highlights the written policies & procedures that are required to be in place plus the records that are required to be kept to meet the licence conditions.

Overview: Primate Licences

Primates are wild, undomesticated animals. They are long-lived, intelligent, socially-complex, and have complex health and welfare needs, which vary according to species. They are not suitable to be kept as pets in a domestic setting and require specialist care.

The Animal Welfare (Primate Licences) (England) Regulations 2024 introduced a new licensing regime setting out welfare standards that keepers of primates are required to meet.

As of 6th April 2026, it will be a legal requirement for all private keepers of primates to hold a primate licence.

Primate keepers who already hold a Dangerous Wild Animal Licence or a licence under The Animal Welfare (Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 will require a primate licence in addition to these other licences. Zoos are exempt.

Licences will normally be issued for a period of 3 years. Primate keepers who already hold a Dangerous Wild Animal Licence may opt to combine both licenses and to shorten the Primate Licence to two years. This will reduce the number of inspections. During the term of the Primate licence a further inspection is required to check compliance.

Links to statutory guidance:

[Licence conditions for primate keepers \(Schedule 1\) - GOV.UK](#)

The guidance should be read alongside:

[The Animal Welfare \(Primate Licences\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

[Licensing process for keeping primates - GOV.UK](#)

Enclosure size & design

The primate enclosure must include an indoor and outdoor area. The indoor and outdoor areas must be connected to each other. The enclosure must be suitable for the primates kept in it with respect to:

- the overall spatial dimensions of the enclosure and the spatial dimensions of the indoor and outdoor areas in the enclosure, taking account of the welfare and behavioural needs of the primates
- its location on the licensed premises
- its substrate
- its structural elements
- the materials used in the construction of the enclosure

Size of the enclosure

Licence condition 25 sets out the size requirements of the enclosure. Only areas that can be used by primates should be considered. The enclosure should be of a suitable size and include vertical space for the size and social needs of the species.

“**Outdoor enclosure**” = an area with outside access and is typically the larger of the two areas.

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“**Indoor enclosure**” = an area which is artificially controlled environment that provides for the welfare needs during adverse weather conditions. An area of a house inhabited by people is not a suitable indoor enclosure.

“**Total enclosure area**” = the area of the outdoor enclosure plus the indoor enclosure.

“**Maximum body length**” = the crown-rump length (CRL) of the primate, measured in metres. To ensure consistency, this is taken as the distance from the point of the nose to the rump (tail base). This is reported as ‘body-length’ in most standard references. Where the species exhibits sexual dimorphism, the body length of the larger of the 2 sexes is to be used, whether that sex is currently held at the time of licensing or not.

“**Usable height**” = the height that the primate can access and use within the enclosure. At least 80% of a roofed enclosure should meet the usable height requirement for the species.

A suitable **outdoor enclosure** for 2 -3 primates (except callitrichids) should have:

- a usable width at least 10 times the species’ maximum body length or 3 metres (whichever is the biggest)
- a usable length at least 15 times the primate’s maximum body length or 4.5 metres (whichever is the biggest)
- if roofed, a usable height of at least 2.4 metres plus twice the species’ maximum body length (the height of the enclosure is measured from the highest climbable surface, which can be the tallest part of the climbing structure or the roof itself if it’s climbable).

For more than 3 primates, except callitrichids, at least 50 times the species’ maximum body length squared should be added to the floor area for each additional animal.

Example – minimum recommended outdoor enclosure dimensions for ring tailed lemurs:

Parameter	Formula	Calculated measurement
Maximum body length (CRL)	45cm	0.45m
Outdoor enclosure width	10 x CRL	4.5m (exceeds minimum 3m)
Outdoor enclosure length	15 x CRL	6.75m (exceeds minimum 4m)
Height of roof	2.4m + (2 x CRL)	3.3m
Total outdoor enclosure area	4.5 x 6.75	30.4m ²
Additional space per lemur	50 x (CRL) ²	10.1m ² per additional lemur

Indoor enclosures should:

- have a usable area which is at least 20% of the recommended overall minimum outdoor enclosure’s area (determined by the total number of primates held in the enclosure)
- have a usable height of at least 2.4 metres plus twice the body length of the species (the same as the outdoor enclosure height)

Example of a recommended indoor enclosure dimensions for 2 – 3 ring tailed lemurs:

Parameter	Formula	Calculated measurement
20% of outdoor enclosure area	0.2 x outdoor enclosure area	6m ²
Additional space per lemur	0.2 x [50 x (CRL) ²]	2m ² per additional lemur
Height of roof	2.4m + (2 x CRL)	3.3m

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If a licence holder has built an outdoor enclosure that exceeds the minimum standards, the indoor area must be a minimum of 20% of the minimum recommended size of the outdoor enclosure, not 20% of the outdoor enclosure actually provided by the licence holder.

Callitrichid enclosures - due to their small size and natural history, callitrichids have their own specific enclosure dimensions.

Suitable minimum spatial dimensions of **outdoor enclosures** for a pair of callitrichids and their offspring (or fewer) are:

- the usable width should be at least 2.5 metres
- the usable length should be at least 4 metres
- the usable height should be at least 2.5 metres

The floor area in the outdoor enclosure should be increased by at least 5 square metres for every additional pair of callitrichids added.

Indoor enclosures for callitrichids should have a:

- usable area of at least 30% of the overall minimum outdoor enclosure's area (as determined by the total number of primates held in the enclosure)
- usable height of at least 2.5 metres (the same as the outdoor enclosure height)

Materials used in the construction of the enclosure

Suitable materials for use in the construction of the outdoor enclosure include:

- secure mesh incorporated into the roof (for leaping primates) or other roof material that provides an additional safe climbing surface
- strong and rigid fencing that the primates cannot dig under and is robust enough to prevent the primates from escaping
- non-toxic material that is free from and resistant to rot

Floor of the enclosure

Indoor and outdoor enclosures must have a suitable substrate. This means a solid floor and not net or mesh flooring. It must incorporate appropriate drainage to avoid excessive water build-up and, in the case of indoor areas, must be easy to clean and disinfect.

Floors must be covered with an organic and non-toxic material, for example wood chips or leaf litter. The material must be suitable for encouraging nesting behaviours (if applicable) and for foraging. The material selected should also take account:

- provision of a clean and comfortable environment to the occupants in the enclosure
- minimising risks of injury and harm to the occupants, including by falling
- maintaining the temperature and humidity of the enclosure

Enclosure check list

Condition	What does the guidance say	✓
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25 (a)	Does the enclosure include an indoor and outdoor area?	
25 (a)	Is the indoor enclosure not in an area of a house inhabited by people?	
25 (a)	Are the indoor and outdoor areas connected to each other?	
25 (b) (i)	Do the spatial dimensions of the enclosure consider the welfare and behavioural needs?	
25 (b) (ii)	Is the location of the enclosure suitable?	
25 (b) (iii)	Is the substrate in the enclosure suitable?	
25 (b) (iv)	Are the structural elements in the enclosure suitable?	
25 (b) (v)	Are the materials used in the construction of the enclosure robust and suitable?	
26 (a)	Is a clean and comfortable environment provided to occupants?	
26 (b)	Does the enclosure present minimal risks of injury?	
26 (c)	Does the enclosure prevent escape? Is there a double door system in place? Are the doors securely locked?	
26 (d)	Does the enclosure deter entry by external wildlife / predators?	
26 (e)	Are there hiding places to allow the occupants to move away from view?	
26 (f)	Is the access to the indoor and outdoor areas controlled remotely without entering the enclosure?	
26 (g)	Is the enclosure designed to prevent a primate being trapped or cornered? Do shelters have multiple entrances and exits?	
26 (h)	Can occupants be safely separated temporarily in a part of the enclosure for cleaning, maintenance, repair purposes?	
26 (i)	Can any occupant be separated temporarily from other occupants for safety / medical reasons or managing interactions?	
27 (a)	Are there at least 2 x safe climbing and hanging structures within the indoor and outdoor areas?	
27 (b)	Are safe resting sites and platforms, bedding material, nest boxes and organic material for foraging provided within the enclosure?	
27 (c)	Does the outdoor area have enough cover to provide shelter to all occupants at the same time?	
27 (d)	Is there suitable natural planting in the outdoor area?	
28	Can the environmental quality be artificially maintained?	
29 (a)	Can the environment be maintained within a suitable temperature range?	
29 (b)	Is the enclosure suitably ventilated?	
29 (c)	Is the humidity within the indoor area be maintained between 50 – 70%?	
29 (d)	Does the lighting regime mimic a 24-hour light period?	
29 (e)	Is noise disturbance kept to a minimum?	
29 (f)	Is there good hygiene to reduce spread of disease?	
30	Does the cleaning routine happen at a frequency that does not cause distress and takes into consideration natural behaviours?	
31 (a & b)	Does the written hygiene protocol include - Instructions for maintaining drains, use of foot dips, use of PPE, avoiding direct contact with occupants and not eating/drinking in or near enclosure?	
32	Does each primate have permanent access to the indoor area and sufficient daily access to the outdoor area?	

List of required written procedures and documents for a Primate Licence

The written procedures are your way of demonstrating to us that you keep your primate(s) in accordance with the conditions laid out in the guidance with regards to maintaining high standards of animal welfare. The licence holder must ensure that any written document is available for inspection at any time and kept

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in a visible and legible form, or if stored in an electronic form, can be produced in a visible and legible form.

1) **Emergency Plan – to ensure all appropriate steps are taken to protect the primates and any person in the event of a fire or other emergency**

To meet condition 7 & 8

The plan must include:

- (a) the measures to be taken for the removal of the primates should the licensed premises become unsafe or uninhabitable;
- (b) the arrangements for the care of the primates during and following an emergency; and
- (c) an up-to-date list of emergency contact details that includes the fire service and police.

2) **Special Circumstances – policy for meeting welfare needs of any primate during period of isolation, policy for if a primate dies and care of primate(s) following revocation of licence**

To meet condition 10

The procedures must include:

- (a) the temporary isolation of any primate;
- (b) the death or escape of a primate; and
- (c) the care of the primates following the revocation of the licence or the death of the licence holder.

3) **Tailored diet plan – which details the food that the primate is to receive daily and is adequate to ensure that the primate receives an appropriate balance of daily fresh produce, commercially prepared food and fresh edible plant material in a suitable natural form**

To meet condition 18

The diet plan must be:

- (a) based on advice or guidance given by an appropriate expert; and
- (b) reviewed every 12 months or, where necessary, at more frequent intervals.

4) **Agreement with registered veterinarian - the licence holder must register the primate(s) with a veterinarian**

To meet condition 21

The vet must agree to provide the following:

- (a) routine visits at an appropriate frequency to assess the health, condition and welfare of each primate;
- (b) carry out or supervise the treatment of a sick primate;
- (c) administer or supervise the administration of medicines, vaccines, parasite control, disease surveillance and contraception to the primates when appropriate;
- (d) monitor the health and welfare of each primate; and
- (e) advice and assistance in an emergency.

5) **Monitoring health & welfare - written procedures must be in place for the purpose of monitoring primate(s) daily for signs of pain, suffering, injury, disease or abnormal behaviour**

To meet condition 22

The procedures must be in place for the purpose of implementing the following requirements:

- (a) the primates are monitored daily for signs of pain, suffering, injury, disease or abnormal behaviour and that any vulnerable animals are checked more frequently;
- (b) the primates are weighed monthly;

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(c) all reasonable precautions are taken to prevent and control the spread of infectious diseases, pathogens and parasites amongst the primates and people;

(d) where any sign of pain, suffering, injury, disease or abnormal behaviour is noted in relation to a primate, steps are taken promptly to identify the cause or possible cause and provide the primate with appropriate treatment and care.

6) Hygiene protocol – the cleaning and disinfecting regimes must maintain appropriate state of cleanliness

To meet condition 31

A written hygiene protocol must be kept for the purpose of ensuring that—

(a) each enclosure is maintained in an appropriate state of cleanliness and the risk of disease transmission is reduced;

(b) at a frequency, and in a way, that does not cause distress, suffering or avoidable discomfort for the primates in the enclosure; and

(c) takes into consideration their natural behaviours.

7) Abnormal behaviour - an up-to-date plan for addressing inappropriate or abnormal behaviour by any primate is kept

To meet condition 37

Where abnormal behaviour is observed, advice from an appropriate expert is sought promptly.

8) Transport policy

To meet condition 44

Where a primate is to be transported or is being transported, the licence holder must ensure that—

(a) the means of transport and the crates or container in which the primate is to be transported are appropriate;

(b) the facilities for loading and unloading the crate or container containing the primate onto or from the means of transport are appropriate;

(c) the primate is physically assessed by a veterinarian to be fit to travel immediately before the primate is loaded onto the vehicle;

(d) the primate is monitored and given treatment during the journey in accordance with the instructions of the veterinarian that assessed it as fit to travel, unless a veterinarian is present to monitor and give treatment throughout the journey;

(e) the length of the journey is minimised as far as is possible;

(f) the primate is not left unattended at any point during the journey; and

(g) the enclosure at the place of destination is suitable for the primate.

If the primates are to be bred from an additional policy is required

9) Breeding health & management plan – provided by registered veterinarian

To meet condition 45

When developing a breeding health and management plan, the named veterinarian should aim to ensure that:

- breeding individuals have appropriate genealogy, are not closely related and that breeding does not result in the hybridisation of species

- the breeding individuals are healthy and free from disease and hereditary health and welfare conditions

- there is an appropriate contingency plan for dealing with any offspring who are rejected or who are not developing at the minimum expected rate for that species

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- *the enclosure and social grouping in the enclosure can suitably accommodate the mother to give birth naturally and rear her offspring (for example by providing nesting materials and separate areas)*
- *breeding individuals are selected according to the likelihood they will successfully rear their offspring*
- *selected breeding individuals appear to be well adapted behaviourally (that is, minimal repetitive behaviours, no excessive aggression or self-injurious behaviours)*
- *breeding from individuals that have previously rejected their young does not occur except in exceptional circumstances (for example, where the rejection occurred due to health issues) – where exceptions are made, the plan should outline steps to reduce the likelihood of future infant rejections*

List of records that must be kept for a Primate Licence

Records must be retained for six years. The licence holder must ensure that any record is available for inspection at any time and kept in a visible and legible form, or if stored in an electronic form, can be produced in a visible and legible form.

Condition	Details of what to record
2	Training records to demonstrate the experience and competence of keepers
6.1(a)	The licence holder must keep individual records for each primate containing the following details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its name • its sex • its microchip number • its date of birth or, if not known, its approximate date of birth • its species • its colour and markings

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the name and contact details of its previous keeper (where applicable) the date and cause of its death (where applicable) where the primate is permanently transferred to other premises, the name and contact details of the new keeper and the address to which it has been relocated <p>The species details can be either the full scientific name or Latin to prevent confusion.</p>
6.1(b)	<p>The licence holder must keep a written record, which is prominently displayed at the licensed premises, containing:</p> <p>(i) the names and contact details of the people who are, for the time being, responsible for the overall care and management of the primates</p> <p>(ii) the names and contact details of the named veterinarian and any other veterinarian who is to be contacted in an emergency</p> <p>(iii) contact details of the local fire service and police</p> <p>6.1(c) The licence holder must keep a written record of all individuals authorised to access and care for the primates.</p>
20	The licence holder must maintain a record of the advice or guidance used to prepare each diet plan and the dates for when each plan has been reviewed or updated.
22	<p>The licence holder must ensure that:</p> <p>(a) the primates are monitored daily for signs of pain, suffering, injury, disease or abnormal behaviour and that any vulnerable animals are checked more frequently</p> <p>(b) the primates are weighed monthly</p> <p>(c) all reasonable precautions are taken to prevent and control the spread of infectious diseases, pathogens and parasites amongst the primates and people</p> <p>(d) where any sign of pain, suffering, injury, disease or abnormal behaviour is noted, steps are taken to promptly identify the cause or possible cause and provide the primate with appropriate treatment and care</p> <p>(e) a record is kept for each primate</p>
37	<p>The licence holder must ensure that—</p> <p>(a) the primates' behaviour is monitored appropriately</p> <p>(b) a record is kept in relation to each primate of any inappropriate or abnormal behaviour exhibited by that primate</p>

Final checklist before you apply

Once you apply for a licence you are telling the Council that you are able to keep a primate in accordance with the Regulations. You are therefore saying that the accommodation is suitable and compliant with the legislation and statutory guidance and that you have all the necessary paperwork in place.

Please ensure you have all the following in place before you apply for a licence.

What you need to include	✓
Completed application form	
Plan of enclosures with measurements (inside and outdoor areas)	
Written procedures (these are all listed on pages 5 – 7 of this document)	
Confirmation you have registered with a veterinarian and a written agreement is in place with them (to meet condition 21)	
Templates of records you intend to keep	
Individual animal's records including copies of vet records and micro chip numbers	

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