Cheshire West and Chester Council

FAQs for the licensing of Home-Boarding Franchise operations ("Arranger's Licences")

Do I need an Arrangers Licence?

All dog home boarding activities need a licence if they are carried out as a commercial business. This includes franchises and businesses which connect pet owners with people willing to look after their animals – whether or not a fee is paid to the Host premises.

The accommodation provided in these circumstances must meet the general and specific conditions in the Regulations. It is the responsibility of the arranging business to ensure that this is the case. The local authority needs to be satisfied that the conditions are met in all of the accommodation provided.

You must be over 18 to apply for a licence.

When we receive your completed application and fee/s you will be contacted by a member of the team to make arrangements to arrange inspections of the Host premises you wish to include on the licence.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the ratings system. This will determine the length of your licence and star rating. It considers whether or not the business is considered to be high or low risk and the levels of compliance found during the inspection of the premises. If a business implements additional higher voluntary standards you can achieve a star rating of 4 or 5.

If the Host premises are scored differently, we will take the lowest score as the overall risk-rating score for the Arranger licence.

What sort of evidence do we require to demonstrate that Hosts are operating beneath the business threshold?

We will accept a statement to that effect from the **Host** in the form of an email or letter. We cannot accept any such statement on behalf of a Host from their Arranger, or anybody else.

We will not require Hosts to supply a more detailed income/expenditure account of numbers of dogs, expenditure on facilities, consumables, cleaning etc. unless we become aware of evidence which suggests a Host may have increased their activities to a point which has taken them above the 'business threshold'.

If we think this has happened, we will discuss this with the Host. Any Host operating above the business threshold will require a separate licence to be in place at their address.

We will expect Arrangers to supply details of numbers of dogs hosted with any given Host in a given period on our request. Arrangers must keep sufficiently detailed records to enable them to fulfil this requirement.

What depth of examination/inspection of individual Hosts will be undertaken?

We will inspect all Host premises against the general and specific conditions contained within the Statutory Guidance and in relation to the Arranger's policies and procedures

The Statutory Guidance says that we should rate the Arranger's licence on the basis of the poorest performing Host.

The Arranger must provide us with full details (name, address, telephone number and email address of **all** their Hosts at the time of application.

Arrangers must have robust policies and processes for inspecting and approving their Hosts.

The Arranger must be able to provide evidence of how they have assessed each of their Hosts against the standards applicable to Home Boarding. This should include the Arranger visiting each of their Hosts to make their own assessments against the statutory conditions. The Arranger must keep detailed records of those assessments.

We will expect copies of the policy and procedural documents to be supplied to us with the application paperwork.

We will expect Arrangers to supply copies of their inspection records relating to any Host upon request. Arrangers must keep sufficiently detailed records to enable them to fulfil this requirement.

Can Arrangers be notified in advance of inspections of their Hosts?
Will Arrangers be permitted to attend such inspections?

Where we plan on giving notice prior to inspection, we will leave it to the Host to notify the Arranger and to arrange their presence if that is what they wish.

If we receive a complaint and an unannounced inspection is deemed necessary, no notice will be given to either the Host or to the Arranger.

How are fees calculated for Arrangers?

Arranger's fees are calculated on the same cost recovery basis as other Animal Activity fees. As we inspect all Host premises the initial application fee will include a review of the policies and procedures and the physical inspection of one premises. If the Arranger also boards dogs at their address, this inspection will be at the Arrangers address. If the Arranger does not board dogs, this will be at a Host premise.

The Arranger Application or Renewal fee is the same as a standard Home Boarding Application or Renewal fee. Any additional Host premises, who do not meet the business threshold and, therefore, do not require a separate licence, will be charged at 1 x our hourly officer rate. Any Host premises which require a separate licence will be charged the standard Home Boarding fee but will be entitled to claim the small business discount.

What happens if an Arranger reduces their number of Hosts on their books or takes on additional Hosts during the life of a licence?

We require Arrangers to notify us of any additional Hosts taken on by them within 1 month of their appointment as a Host. We would expect this notification will be accompanied by a copy of the Arranger's assessment record for that host. We will carry out an inspection of any additional hosts at the earliest opportunity and invoice the Arranger for the necessary fee,

We will also expect Arrangers to notify us in writing (email or letter) promptly when they terminate any arrangement with a Host.

If an Arranger has become aware of one of their Hosts whose standards have slipped to a point which might threaten the Arrangers risk-rating/star rating, we would expect an Arranger to act to secure improvements through their own processes or by terminating their agreement with that Host.

If the Arranger elects to terminate the agreement with any Host, they will need to notify us immediately. If we have not been notified of a termination of a Host agreement and a subsequent inspection by us indicates a reduction in star-rating for the Arranger, the Arranger will not be entitled to recover their position by notification of termination **after** the fact, otherwise than by using the (chargeable) "re-rating inspection" process.