**Guidance on specific conditions – breeding cats**

**1. Definitions**

*“adult cat”* means a cat aged 6 months or more,

*“sleeping area”* means a fully-enclosed indoor area in which a cat can rest and sleep,

*“exercise area”* means a secure area where cats may exercise and play,

*“breeding”* when used in the context of *“breeding cat”* means any adult cat intended to be used, being used or that has been used for the purposes of producing offspring.

**2. Advertisements and sales**

***Condition: A cat must not be advertised or offered for sale—***

***- which was not bred by the licence holder,***

***- from a place other than the premises where it was born and reared under the licence,***

***unless the cat is over the age of 12 months and was procured by the licence holder for breeding purposes.***

**Guidance:**

The steps from birth to sale must be clear, and the licensing authority must be shown how and where kittens are bred, born, reared and kept until sale.

To demonstrate that they are the breeder, the licence holder’s involvement in the complete reproductive process from conception and gestation to birth should be evident. Where requested, local authority inspectors must be shown details of the mating(s) and both parents (where known).

Licence holders may provide other supporting evidence such as photographs and veterinary records to show that they housed and cared for the kittens and their mother for the first 8 weeks of its life.

***Condition: Any advertisement for the sale of a cat must—***

***- include the number of the licence holder’s licence,***

***- specify the local authority that issued the licence, and***

***- display the age of the cat being advertised.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities should ensure that the licence holder understands that “any advertisement” includes ads placed on social media platforms, ad sites like Gumtree, Pets4Homes etc., and any other web site on which the licence holder advertises animals for sale to the public.

Local authorities should, where practicable, verify that ads posted by the licence holder meet the above requirements and take steps to ensure compliance where it becomes clear that this condition of licence is not being met.

***Condition: Any equipment and accessories being sold with a cat must be suitable for it.***

**Guidance:**

Inspections undertaken by Local authorities should, as far as possible, confirm that licenced breeders only supply equipment and accessories that are designed for and are suitable for the kittens (or cats) being sold.

***Condition: The purchaser must be informed of the age, sex and veterinary record of the cat being sold.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities should ensure that the licence holder provides this information as a minimum for any cat sold.

Ideally, breeders should also be providing new owners with information on how to properly care for their new cat. Such guidance could be in the form of care leaflets or through the provision of links to appropriate websites.

***Condition: No kitten aged under 8 weeks may be—***

***(a) sold, or***

***(b) permanently separated from its biological mother.***

***Condition: The condition regarding permanent separation from the biological mother (para. 2(5)(b) of schedule 7) does not apply in relation to a kitten if separation is necessary for the health or welfare of the kitten, other kittens from the same litter or its biological mother or if the kittens biological mother is deceased.***

**Guidance:**

Kittens must remain with their mother for the first eight weeks of life unless the mother dies or there is a health risk to the kitten or its littermates or the mother from remaining with her. Where necessary, a veterinarian may certify that it is in the best interests of the animal to be removed earlier, **but it must not be sold**. The local authority should be satisfied that licence holders retain records that are sufficient to demonstrate compliance with these conditions.

Where an inspector finds a kitten less than 8 weeks old that has been separated from its mother, they must take steps to determine why and any evidence provided to justify the separation should be supported by veterinary advice.

***Condition: A cat may only be sold if the name, and an address, of the licence holder are disclosed to the purchaser.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities should ensure that the holder of a cat breeding licence understands this condition of licence. It is recommended that local authorities establish upfront with the breeder the address that will be used. Where this differs from the address on which the licensable activity is undertaken, the necessary steps should be taken to confirm that the address given is legitimate. Ideally, local authorities should seek to establish the association between the address given and the licence holder.

**3. Number of breeding female cats and litters produced**

***Condition: The number of breeding female cats kept in relation to the licensable activity of breeding cats at any time on the premises specified in the licence and on which the licensable activity is carried on must not exceed the number specified by the local authority in the licence.***

**Guidance:**

Regulation 6(6)(b) requires local authorities to specify in any breeding licence granted the maximum number of breeding queens that can be kept on the premises for the licensable activity. During any inspection local authorities should determine as far as possible that the licence holder is complying with this condition and where more queens are found on site than are permitted by licence action must be taken to establish the status of any additional queens and whether they are or have been used for breeding purposes (again as far as this is possible). Veterinary advice should be sought where this is considered necessary.

***Condition: The number of litters produced on the premises during each consecutive 12 month period commencing with the date on which the licence was granted or, as the case may be, renewed must not exceed twice the maximum number of breeding female cats specified in the licence.***

**Guidance:**

Records should be thoroughly checked during any local authority inspection to ensure that the number of litters of kittens produced in the preceding 12 month period does not exceed 2 x the maximum number of breeding queens permitted under licence. Action must be taken where it is evident that more litters of kittens have been bred than is permitted based on queen numbers (remember, the breeder’s licence restricts each queen to a maximum of two litters in a 12-month period).

**4. Suitable environment**

***Condition: Each cat must have access to—***

***(a) a clean, dry and warm sleeping area with comfortable bedding and which is free from draughts, and***

***(b) an exercise area.***

**Guidance:**

Cats kept in domestic premises for the licensable activity must have access to more than one room, a separate sleeping location, outdoor access for toileting as needed and be permitted to exercise at least twice daily.

Cats kept by the licence holder in an enclosure style environment must have an adjoining run or be given access to an outside secure area where they can exercise. Enclosures must be secure, protect the cats from weather and provide a comfortable and warm sleeping area.

***Condition: Each cat must be provided with sufficient space to—***

***(a) stand upright on its hind legs,***

***(b) lie down fully stretched out,***

***(c) walk, and***

***(d) turn around,***

***without touching another cat or the walls of the sleeping area.***

**Guidance:**

The minimum acceptable enclosure sizes (where these are used) for breeding cats are as set out in Annex I. In circumstances where licence holders breed cats from their place of residence, local authorities must be satisfied that any queens kept for the licensable activity have sufficient space and freedom to perform the above behaviours in a safe and secure environment.

***Condition: The exercise area must not be used as a sleeping area unless the cat chooses to do so.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities need only confirm that both a separate sleeping area and exercise area are provided for each cat kept for the licensable activity and that these meet the needs of the cats.

***Condition: There must be a separate birthing area for each breeding female cat to give birth in and which contains a suitable bed for giving birth.***

**Guidance:**

Cats must be provided with a private, quiet and safe location in which to give birth. This area may be equipped with a suitable birthing bed or alternatively a suitable box lined with appropriate bedding material. There must be sufficient bedding to ensure a soft surface for the cat and to enable the absorption of mess resulting from birthing. The cat should have access to this location and to the bed 5 to 7 days prior to her due date to ensure she is comfortable accessing it. The breeder should be able to easily access the birthing area in case the cat needs assistance during the birth of her litter.

The bed must be constructed of easily cleanable impervious material and must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected between litters. Where a queen is giving birth in a domestic environment it is acceptable for a temporary disposable covering to be used.

The birthing area should contain everything the cat may need including, some food, plenty of fresh drinking water and a litter tray.

In domestic premises cats may choose a birthing area somewhere other than that intended by the owner and should be allowed to do so.

***Condition: Each birthing area must be maintained at an appropriate temperature and include an area which allows the breeding female cat to move away from heat spots and from her young if she chooses to do so.***

**Guidance:**

Licence holders must be able to demonstrate that any areas to be used for birthing are capable of being maintained within a temperature range of 18°C – 24°C. Monitoring of the temperature in the birthing area must be in place. The birthing area must be designed to allow the cat to move away from areas that are either too warm or too cold.

***Condition: Each cat must be provided with constant access to a sleeping area.***

**Guidance:**

Each cat kept for the licensable activity must have access to a safe and comfortable sleeping area where it can rest protected from the weather and temperature extremes.

***Condition: No kitten aged under 8 weeks may be transported without its biological mother except-***

***(a) if a veterinary surgeon agrees for health or welfare reasons that it may be so transported, or***

***(b) in an emergency.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities should encourage licence holders to record the detail of any such instance where it is necessary to transport a kitten under 8 weeks old without its mother, including any agreement from a veterinary surgeon that such transportation should take place. For the avoidance of doubt, the term emergency includes transporting or moving a kitten to a place of safety due to it being seized due to welfare concerns and to protect its welfare.

***Condition: No pregnant breeding female cat may be transported later than 54 days after the date of successful mating or artificial insemination except to a veterinary surgeon.***

**Guidance:**

Licence holders should make all reasonable efforts to ensure that where veterinary advice is needed the vet visits the premises on which the pregnant cat is kept rather than transporting the cat to the vet.

A pregnant breeding cat can of course still be transported if it has been seized due to welfare concerns and in order to safeguard its welfare.

***Condition: No breeding female cat may be transported earlier than 48 hours after giving birth except to a veterinary surgeon where it is not otherwise practicable or appropriate for that person to attend to the female cat.***

**Guidance:**

All efforts must be made to have the veterinary surgeon attend the premises where the cat is located rather than transporting the cat to the veterinary surgery, unless the circumstances require urgent transportation to a veterinarian.

A breeding cat can of course still be transported earlier than 48 hours after whelping if it has been seized due to welfare concerns and in order to safeguard its welfare.

**5. Suitable diet**

***Condition: Each kitten must be provided with the opportunity to start weaning as soon as it is capable of ingesting feed on its own.***

***Condition: Each adult cat must be provided with feed appropriate to its needs.***

**Guidance:**

Licence holders should have appropriate feeding plans in place for breeding queens and any kittens produced. Where advised by a veterinary surgeon, dietary supplements should be given. A supply of clean, fresh drinking water must always be made available as this is vital for milk production.

***Condition: Each kitten must be provided with feed appropriate for its stage of development.***

***Condition: Reasonable efforts must be made so that each kitten ingests the correct share of the feed provided.***

Licence holders must have a feeding plan in place that ensures kittens are being fed a high quality diet appropriate for their age. All reasonable efforts should be made to supervise feeding to ensure that less dominant or smaller kittens get their allocated share of the food. Where it is evident that a kitten is not eating as expected or is struggling to compete for its share, the licence holder must take steps to address this. Kittens should be weighed regularly in order to monitor their growth rate.

**6. Training and exercise**

***Condition: Opportunities to exercise which benefit the cats’ physical and mental health must be provided, unless advice from a veterinarian suggests otherwise.***

**Guidance:**

Cats kept in enclosed areas should be allowed opportunities to climb or jump onto different levels within the enclosure and be able to use scratching posts and play with cat toys or other forms of environmental enrichment which should be changed sufficiently often to reduce boredom.

***Condition: All kittens must be given suitable and adequate opportunities to—***

***(a) learn how to interact with people, cats and other animals where such interaction benefits their welfare, and***

***(b) become habituated to noises, objects and activities associated with a domestic environment.***

**Guidance:**

The licence holder must have in place an adequate programme to socialise kittens and prepare them for life in the environment in which they are going to live. This is particularly important where a breeder keeps a large number of breeding cats in facilities separate from domestic dwellings where regular interaction is much more likely to occur. Procedures must be available so that all staff know how to appropriately socialise kittens.

Where queens are anxious or aggressive when kittens are approached and handled, this process must be gradual.

Kittens must be handled regularly from shortly after birth for short periods (e.g. gently picking up and examining) to habituate them to human contact and to examine them for any sign of disease and to ensure they are feeding properly. The window of opportunity for socialising kittens is short so habituating kittens to humans and the human environment must start early.

***Condition: All adult cats must have at least daily opportunities to interact with people where such interaction benefits their welfare.***

**Guidance:**

Licence holders must make time to interact with all adult cats kept for the licensable activity on a daily basis where such interaction is welcomed by the cat and benefits its overall welfare. Where possible, cats should have the opportunity for interaction with more than one person where such opportunities arise. Ideally, further interaction will occur naturally and periodically throughout the day.

***Condition: Each adult cat must be given suitable and adequate opportunities to become habituated to handling by people.***

**Guidance:**

Cats to be used for breeding should be carefully selected to ensure they have the right temperament and confidence to live with people and are comfortable with regular handling. To determine their suitability and to ensure they become habituated, regular interaction and handling needs to occur. Breeders should therefore be able to demonstrate that they understand the importance of habituation and the steps they implement to ensure it.

**7. Protection from suffering, injury and disease**

***Condition: All cats for sale must be in good health.***

**Guidance:**

Licence holders must not knowingly sell any kitten or cat that is not fit, healthy or, where applicable, socialised. Where it is clear that an animal that is for sale is not in good physical or mental health it must be removed from sale and provided with appropriate care, including veterinary care where necessary, until it is considered fit for sale. In order to meet this licence obligation the licence holder and any staff employed should be adequately trained and experienced enough to identify when a kitten or cat is unsuitable for sale due to ill-health, injury or another form of suffering.

Local authorities should therefore be satisfied that the licence holder has sufficient experience and knowledge to identify such animals and know the remedial action that should be taken. Procedures should be in place to deal with ill and injured animals.

***Condition: Any cat with a condition which materially affects, or is likely to materially affect, its quality of life must not be—***

***a) transferred in ownership,***

***b) offered for sale, or***

***c) moved from the premises specified in the licence and on which the licensable activity is carried on, other than to an isolation facility or veterinary care facility where the animal is in need of isolation or treatment,***

***until it has recovered, ceased to require isolation or, where there is no need for the cat to be isolated, been certified by a veterinary surgeon as being in a condition that is suitable for such transfer, sale or movement.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities should be satisfied that the licence holder has provision on the licenced premises or at another nearby suitable facility to isolate any animal with a condition that is likely to be affecting its quality of life, either short-term or long-term. If the animal is to remain on the licenced premises it should be located in a suitably quiet and safe part of the premises which is readily accessible to allow for regular monitoring of its condition. Veterinary opinion should be sought where necessary, and must be sought, where it is clear that the animals condition is long-term or unlikely to improve. If the animal requires to be transported to a veterinary facility then it should be done in a manner that minimises the stress on the animal.

***Condition: The licence holder must ensure that no female cat—***

***a) is mated or artificially inseminated if aged less than 10 months,***

***b) gives birth to more than two litters of kittens within 12 months,***

***c) gives birth to more than 8 litters of kittens in its lifetime,***

***d) is mated or artificially inseminated if aged 8 or more years,***

***e) is mated or artificially inseminated after she has delivered one litter of kittens by caesarean section.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities must be satisfied that any breeding programme implemented by the licence holder is fully compliant with the above conditions. The conditions set out above are particularly significant in terms of protecting the welfare of breeding queens and local authorities should ensure that relevant records are inspected during any inspection to confirm compliance.

***Condition: No cat may be kept for breeding if it can reasonably be expected, on the basis of its genotype, conformation, behaviour or state of health, that breeding from it could have a detrimental effect on its health or welfare or the health or welfare of its offspring.***

**Guidance:**

It is the view of the Scottish Government that the breeding of two particular breeds of cats would likely represent a breach of the above licence condition. These are the Munchkin and the Scottish Fold. The breeding of these breeds is not supported by cat welfare organisations and the veterinary profession. These two breeds are also not accepted by the Governing Council of the Cat Fancy (GCCF) for registration, so are seen as unacceptable by many in pedigree and showing circles. A local authority should refuse to grant a licence if it is not entirely satisfied that the above licence condition is likely to be met by the applicant.

The table below lists a number of cat breeds, the key characteristics of those breeds and the health issues specific to each breed. The table does not list all breeds of cats, only those breeds in which regular health issues arise. A person who intends to breed cats other than the Scottish Fold and the Munchkin will not necessarily be likely to breach the above licence condition. Before granting a licence to such a person, the local authority should be satisfied that the licence applicant has sufficient knowledge of and experience with the breed in question. Demonstration of a history of successfully breeding a particular breed may be relevant to any assessment of whether the above licence condition will be met.

Breeders must screen and select both parents carefully in order to avoid conformational extremes, inherited diseases or negative behavioural traits. In cases where such experience cannot be demonstrated, a local authority can of course decide to issue a licence to the applicant, but where it does it is recommended that the licence be issued initially for a period of 1 year.

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| **Breed characteristic** | **Health problem** | **Breed examples** |
| Flat-faced (brachycephalic) | * Breathing difficulties due to short muzzle and small nostrils. Nose may be positioned between eyes * Tear duct abnormalities and tear overflow * Eye problems * Skin problems due to skin folds on face * Dental problems * Difficulty eating * Difficulty grooming | * Most Persians * Exotic Shorthairs * British Longhair * British Shorthair * American Shorthair * Himalayan |
| Short limbs/dwarfism | * Abnormal joints and limb deformities * Reduced mobility and difficulty jumping * Increased risk of spinal problems * Arthritis * Unable to groom properly due to reduced flexibility | * **Munchkin** * Bambino |
| No tails or short (bobbed) tails | * Spinal deformities or Spina bifida * Incontinence * Mobility problems due to weakness or paralysis * Arthritis * Unable to display normal cat body language due to lack of tail | * Manx * Pixie Bobs * American Bobtail * American Bobtail Shorthair * Japanese Bobtail * Japanese Bobtail Longhair * Kurilian Bobtail * Kurilian Bobtail Longhair |
| Curled or folded ears | * Cartilage deformity throughout body * Joint and mobility problems * Arthritis * Unable to display normal cat body language | * **Scottish Fold** * **Scottish Fold Longhair** * American Curl * American Curl Longhair |
| Hairless | * Behavioural problems as no coat to groom * Skin problems due to excessive skin oils or damage from grooming hairless skin * Reduced insulation * Sunburn * No whiskers limit navigational skills | * Sphynx * Peterbald |
| Deformed coats | * Increased risk of skin problems | * Cornish Rex * Devon Rex * American Wirehair * La Perm * La Perm Shorthair * Selkirk Rex * Selkirk rex Longhair |
| Very long, fine coats | * Matt easily * Difficult for cat to groom easily | * Himalayan |
| Wild cat hybrids | * Wild cat characteristics * Aggressive to people or animals * Injury or death of domestic female during mating * Behavioural problems | * Bengal * Savannah * Chausie * Cheetoh |

***Condition: Breeding female cats must be supervised with minimal disturbance during birthing and the licence holder must keep a record of—***

***a) the date of birth of each kitten,***

***b) each kitten’s sex and colour,***

***c) the number of kittens in the litter, and***

***d) any other significant events.***

**Guidance:**

During inspections, local authorities must ensure that the licence holder is recording all the required information required in respect to the birth of each kitten and the litter. Significant events could include whether any kittens were stillborn, under-developed or human assistance being required during the birth due to the position of a kitten or the kitten’s size. Any veterinary input required, be it advice or hands-on assistance, should be fully recorded.

***Condition: The licence holder must keep a record of each kitten sale including—***

***a) the microchip number of the kitten (if any),***

***b) the date of the sale, and***

***c) the age of the kitten on that date.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities during any inspection must ensure that the licence holder is accurately recording and retaining this information. Licence holders should be encouraged to also record any other information of significance for any kittens sold.

***Condition: The licence holder must keep a record of the following in relation to each breeding cat—***

***a) its name,***

***b) its sex,***

***c) its microchip and database details (if any),***

***d) its date of birth (if known),***

***e) the postal address where it normally resides,***

***f) its breed or type,***

***g) its description,***

***h) details of its biological parents (to the extent known),***

***i) details of any veterinary treatment it has received, and***

***j) the date and cause of its death (where applicable).***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities must during any inspection undertaken confirm that this information is being accurately recorded by the licence holder. The records must be made available to an inspector upon request.

***Condition: The licence holder must also keep a record of the following in relation to each breeding female cat—***

***a) the number of any known pregnancies,***

***b) the number of its litters,***

***c) the date or dates on which it has given birth, and***

***d) the number of caesarean sections it has had, if any.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities must during any inspection undertaken confirm that this information is being accurately recorded by the licence holder. The records must be made available to an inspector upon request.

***Condition: Any preventative healthcare plan agreed with the veterinary surgeon with whom the licence holder has registered (under the condition in paragraph 9(8) of the general conditions) must be implemented.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities must, as far as practicably possible, confirm that any preventative healthcare plan in place and that was agreed with the breeder’s veterinary surgeon is being implemented. More generally, breeder’s should, as a minimum, be expected to have a healthcare plan for all breeding cats that covers vaccinations, parasite control (internal and external), body weight/conditioning monitoring and screening for feline leukaemia (FeLV) and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV).

***Condition: The licence holder must keep a record of any preventative or curative healthcare (or both) given to each cat.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities must during any inspection undertaken confirm that this information is being accurately recorded by the licence holder. The records must be made available to an inspector upon request.

***Condition: Where any other activity involving animals is undertaken on the premises on which the licensable activity of breeding cats is carried on, it must be kept entirely separate from the area where that licensable activity is carried on.***

**Guidance:**

Local authorities must be satisfied that where other activities involving animals are being conducted on the premises used for cat breeding they are undertaken in a separate area or building. Local authorities should, where possible, seek to confirm the nature of the other activity and whether it is an activity that requires to be licenced and, if so, whether the operator is so licenced.