

Criteria for inclusion on the Secretary of State's list of zoo inspectors

This paper sets out the criteria to be met by all successful applicants to the Secretary of State's list of zoo inspectors.

The Zoo Inspectorate

Section 8 of the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 provides for the establishment of the Secretary of State's list of zoo inspectors and the list should comprise of two parts.

The first part (List 1) comprises:

Veterinary surgeons and practitioners with experience of animals of the kinds which are kept in zoos or which might be so kept, with competence to advise on implementation in zoos of the conservation measures required by the Act.

The second part (List 2) comprises:

Persons competent to inspect animals in zoos, to advise on their keeping and welfare, to advise on implementation of the conservation measures in zoos required by the Act and to advise on management of zoos generally.

The standard criteria

The proposed standard criteria are set out below:

1. Applicants should currently be engaged in the zoo field.
 - For inclusion on List 1, this effectively means a vet familiar with current practice in zoo medicine. Additionally for inclusion on List 1, applicants must be a registered member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.
 - For inclusion on List 2, this effectively means an experienced zoo curator or director.
2. Applicants should have significant direct experience in the field (expected to be a minimum of five years).
3. Applicants should possess the skills necessary to conduct a professional inspection, acting with courtesy and respect at all times, and to complete a comprehensive report in a timely manner, without prejudice.

The core competences to fulfil point 3 are:

- Knowledge of the zoo licensing legislation, guidance and process.
- Competence in the subject areas covered by the Zoo Licensing Act (animal husbandry and veterinary care, conservation and education measures in zoos, health and safety)
- Active experience

- Professional behaviour and conduct (as per relevant departments core values)
 - Communication skills, both oral and written
 - Timeliness
 - Teamworking
4. In accordance with section 9 of the Zoo Licensing Act 1981, successful applicants must be approved by Defra (on behalf of the Secretary of State) following consultation with representatives of the British Veterinary Association (BVA) and the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA).

Clearly the criteria set out in the legislation must be satisfied but in exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary for Defra to waive certain of these expanded criteria, for example, to allow recruitment of specialists in minority fields where satisfactory candidates meeting all the criteria are unavailable. In such circumstances, Defra would consult with BVA and BIAZA as set out in criteria 4 above.

Other points

It is necessary to maintain a list with sufficient spread of expertise so recruitment may focus on particular areas of expertise, for example, in keeping of particular species groups.

It is also desirable to maintain a list with sufficient geographical coverage. The Inspectorate can function most effectively with the regulatory burden minimised if inspectors have a shorter distance to travel to inspections. Recruitment may therefore focus on particular regions of the country to ensure adequate geographical coverage.