

Sex establishment licences – Guide

If you are running a sex establishment in the borough you must ensure that it is licensed.

Sex establishments must be licensed under the [Local Government \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 1982](#), as amended by the [Policing and Crime Act 2009](#).

The definition of sex establishment includes:

- sex cinemas, at which R18-certificate films can be shown
- sex shops, which are premises, vehicles or stalls used for selling, displaying or demonstrating sex articles (which may include R18-certificate videos and DVDs) or other things used in connection with sexual activity or acts of force or restraint associated therewith
- sexual entertainment venues, which are premises at which entertainment comprising live sexually stimulating performances or displays of nudity is provided in front of an audience, for the financial gain of the organiser or performers. Provision of such entertainment on no more than 11 occasions per year, with at least a calendar month between each occasion, will not require a sex establishment licence.

You must not begin operating a sex establishment until your application for a license is granted.

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1. Applying for a sex establishment licence

Applicants for sex establishment licences must be over 18, and not be disqualified from holding a licence (for example, because they have been refused a licence in the previous 12 months, unless that refusal was subsequently overturned on appeal).

To make an application for a sex establishment licence, click the links below to access our electronic application system.

[Apply online for a sex establishment licence](#)

[Please click here to see our schedule of fees](#)

Applicants will be required to advertise their application by placing a public notice in a local newspaper or similar publication (to appear within seven days of making the application), and for applications relating to premises, by displaying a notice on the exterior of the premises where it can be conveniently read, for **21 days** from the date of application. Templates for these notices are provided with the application form.

2. Objecting to an application

Any person may object to a sex establishment licence application within 21 days of the application being made.

Objections must be made in writing and include the grounds and the name and address of the person making the objection. Although copies of any objections will be sent to the applicant, personal details of private individuals will be removed unless they have explicitly consented to their details being provided.

Any objections should be sent by email to Licensing@hounslow.gov.uk

3. Determination of applications

All applications for new sex establishment licences and for variations of existing licences will be considered by our Licensing Sub-Committee at a hearing, as will any applications for transfer or renewal of existing licences which have attracted objections. Any objections received in respect of an application will be taken into account during that process.

Applications must be refused if the applicant:

- is under 18 years of age
- has had a sex establishment licence revoked in the previous 12 months
- has not lived in an EEA state for 6 continuous months prior to making the application, or is not incorporated in an EEA state
- has been refused the grant or renewal of a licence for the premises, vehicle, vessel or stall in the previous 12 months, unless the refusal was reversed on appeal.

The authority may also refuse an application if:

- the applicant is deemed to be unsuitable to hold a licence for any reason, including a previous conviction for an offence
- the business to which the application relates would be managed by or carried on for the benefit of another person who would be refused a licence if he made the application himself

- the number of sex establishments in the local area at the time the application is made is equal to or exceeds the number which the authority consider is appropriate for that area
- the authority considers that the grant or renewal of the licence would be inappropriate, having regard to the character of the local area, the use to which any other premises in the vicinity are put, or the layout, character or condition of the premises, vehicle, vessel or stall in respect of which the application is made.

Licences will be granted for a maximum period of a year, and a renewal application must be made before the expiry of the licence if the proprietor wishes to continue trading.

4. Right of appeal

Any applicant who is refused a licence, or refused the renewal of a licence, may appeal to the local magistrates' court, within 21 days of being notified of the refusal. However, the right to appeal does not apply where the licence was refused on the grounds that the number of sex establishments in the area exceeds the number which the authority consider is appropriate, or where the grant of the licence would be inappropriate considering the character of the area, the nature of other premises in the area, or the premises themselves.

A licence-holder may also appeal to the local magistrates' court against a condition or restriction imposed on a licence, or the refusal of a variation of a licence, or the revocation of a licence, within **21 days** of receiving notification of a decision.

It is possible to appeal to the crown court against a magistrates' court decision.

5. Complaints

In the event of a complaint about a sex establishment, we advise that you seek to contact the trader directly in the first instance - preferably in the form a letter (with proof of delivery). If that has not worked, please see:

For further advice: [AdviceGuide](#).

or

From outside the UK: [UK European Consumer Centre](#).

If you believe that a sex establishment is operating without or in breach of a licence, please contact us and we will investigate further.

If you have recently applied for a sex establishment licence and wish to comment on the way in which your application was dealt with, please see our complaints webpage for further details:
https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/info/20158/customer_services/1402/make_a_complaint_or_comment/2

6. Contact us

Licensing Team
London Borough of Hounslow
Hounslow House
7 Bath Road
Hounslow
Middlesex
TW3 3EB

Telephone: 020 8583 5555

Email: licensing@hounslow.gov.uk