

GUIDELINES FOR KEEPING RABBITS ON ALLOTMENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Allotment tenants may keep rabbits on allotments under the Allotments Act 1950. This is on the condition that they are not *“kept in such a place or in such a manner as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance”*

2 REGISTRATION & INSPECTION

- 2.1 Tenants are required to make an application to the WHBC to keep rabbits on their allotment plot. Details of the number of rabbits and size and location of their housing shall be given. Contact details shall be provided in case of any problems. Please see attached *Request for Permission to Keep Rabbits on Allotments* application form.
- 2.2 Tenants shall be responsible for the welfare of the rabbits and shall ensure they do not cause a nuisance to others. Please see Clause 3.8 in the Allotment Tenancy Agreement.
- 2.3 The granting of permission is dependent on WHBC conditions being met and guidelines followed.
- 2.4 Representative of WHBC have the right to inspect the rabbits at any time. If the Council has cause to investigate complaints of maltreatment, any costs incurred will be passed to the tenant for payment.
- 2.5 The tenants Allotment Tenancy Agreement will be terminated in the instance of failure to adhere to these guidelines and thus in breaching their tenancy agreement.

3 ANIMAL HUSBANDRY & WELFARE

3.1 Housing

- 3.1.1 Housing is key to ensuring the welfare of rabbits and should allow expression of natural behaviours.
- 3.1.2 The housing shall be regularly maintained to a good, tidy standard and free from obvious faults that may cause injury.
- 3.1.3 The structures shall be sited a minimum of 3 meters from adjacent boundaries abutting residential properties to minimize potential nuisance.

3.1.4 The total area of the housing structure should not exceed more than 10% of the total allotment plot area although the maximum permitted size will be 10ft x 12ft.

3.1.5 Rabbit Hutch

3.1.6 The fully or partially enclosed rabbit hutch or pen shall provide the following:

3.1.6.1 Total floor space of 0.75 m².

3.1.6.2 Protection from predators.

3.1.6.3 Clean dry bedding material to absorb moisture and odour (eg wood shavings or straw).

3.1.6.4 Warmth during the colder months and shade during the summer. As a general guide the aim should be to achieve a temperature range of 10°C - 20°C.

3.1.6.5 Be draught free but have adequate ventilation.

3.1.7 Outdoor Run

3.1.8 A fully enclosed outdoor run that provides a minimum size of 0.75m² per rabbit, providing the rabbit with plenty of space to hop, sit with ears erect and play.

3.1.8.1 There should be an additional means of overhead shelter (eg shrubs to provide rabbits with protection from direct sunlight, strong wind and driving rain).

3.1.8.2 The structure shall be allowed periods of rest to allow the ground to recover.

3.2 **Food & Water**

3.2.1 Rabbits should have continuous and plentiful access to cool, clean and fresh water, feed appropriate to the age and species of rabbits and in sufficient quantities.

3.2.2 Food stuffs shall be stored so they are kept clean, tidy, and properly protected from rodents and other pests.

3.3 **Health**

3.3.1 Welfare

3.3.1.1 The allotment tenant is responsible for ensuring that their rabbits are free from distress, pain, injury and disease.

3.3.2 Preventative and/or veterinary treatment

3.3.2.1 Important indications of health and signs of ill-health are detailed in the *DEFRA Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Rabbits*. It is essential that the Tenant should watch for signs of distress or disease and take prompt remedial action.

3.3.2.2 Vaccinations, injections and similar procedures should be undertaken by competent, trained operators. Care should be taken to prevent injury and unnecessary disturbance of the rabbits.

3.3.2.3 Ailing or injured rabbits should be segregated wherever possible and treated or, if necessary removed from the allotment plot.

3.3.3 Sanitation

3.3.3.1 The rabbit hutch or pen should be cleaned a minimum of once a week or more frequently as necessary.

3.3.3.2 Tenants are responsible for the removal of all arisings from the site. Soiled bedding shallot be composted anywhere on the allotment site.

3.3.4 Number of Rabbits

3.3.4.1 The maximum number of rabbits per allotment plot is at the discretion of WHBC.

4 Nuisance to Neighbours & Cleanliness

4.1 Provided the above guidelines on housing, food and water and health are followed, rabbits should not become a nuisance to others. (See Clause 3.2 of the Allotment Tenancy Agreement)

5 Breeding & Profit

5.1 Allotment tenants shall not breed rabbits on the allotment site nor profit from the sale of produce. (See Clause 3.2 of the Allotment Tenancy Agreement).