

Conditions and guidelines for keeping rabbits on North East Lincolnshire Council allotment sites

Updated 15.09.23

Introduction

Allotment Tenants may keep Rabbits on allotments under the Allotments Act 1950 and to install and maintain a structure on the plot as reasonably necessary for that purpose'. This is on the condition that they are not a nuisance to other allotment-holders or surrounding residential properties. Tenants are restricted to 4 rabbits of the same sex on a plot and will remain fully responsible for the animals and structures in which they are kept.

Registration and Inspection

Tenants are required to make an application to North East Lincolnshire Council to keep Rabbits on their allotment plot. Details of the number of Rabbits and size and location of their housing must be given. Contact details must be provided in case of any problems.

Tenants are responsible for the Rabbits welfare and must ensure they do not cause a nuisance to others.

The granting of permission is dependent on North East Lincolnshire Council conditions being met and guidelines followed.

Representative of NELC or advisor appointed by the Council 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.

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.

Animal Husbandry and Welfare

Housing:

Housing is key to ensuring the welfare of Rabbits and should allow expression of natural behaviours.

The housing must be regularly maintained to a good, tidy standard and free from obvious faults that may cause injury.

The structures must be sited a minimum of 3 meters from adjacent boundaries abutting residential properties to minimize potential nuisance.

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.**

Rabbit Hutch:

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

- Total floor space of 0.75 m² per rabbit.
- Protection from predators
- Clean dry bedding material to absorb moisture and odour (e.g. wood shavings or straw)
- Warmth during colder months and shade during summer. As a general guide the aim should be to achieve a temperature range of 10°C - 20°C.
- Be draught free but have adequate ventilation.

Outdoor Run:

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.

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

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

Food & Water:

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.

Foodstuffs must be stored so they are kept clean, tidy, and properly protected from rodents and other pests.

WATER MUST BE AVAILABLE AT ALL TIMES. If, when checked there is no water available this will result in a formal warning. Any breach of this requirement will result in permission to keep rabbits being revoked.

Health

Welfare:

The Allotment Tenant is responsible for ensuring that their rabbits are free from distress, pain, injury and disease.

Preventative and/or veterinary treatment:

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.

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.

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

Sanitation:

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

Tenants are responsible for the removal of all arisings from the site. **Soiled bedding must not be composted anywhere on the allotment site.**

Number of Rabbits:

The maximum number of rabbits per allotment plot is at the discretion of North East Lincolnshire Borough Council. This currently stands at a maximum of 4.

Nuisance to Neighbours & Cleanliness:

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)

Breeding & Profit:

Allotment Tenants are not permitted to breed rabbits on the allotment site nor profit from the sale of produce. (See Clause 4.n of the Allotment Tenancy Agreement)

Any queries regarding this document should be directed to:

The Allotment Team

Tel 324696

Allotments.enquiries@nelincs.gov.uk