



Conditions and guidelines for keeping Rabbits on allotments

Updated: October 2025

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 2 rabbits on a plot and will remain fully responsible for the animals and structures in which they are kept.

Two males are prone to fight and may require separate areas whereas two females can usually be kept without problems. The best combination is a neutered male with a neutered female.

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. Rabbits are very active so should have as large a living space as possible. The height must allow for them to stand up on the hind feet without ear touching the top.

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 1 metre 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. The **maximum permitted size will be 10ft x 6ft. x 3ft.**

Rabbit Hutch

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

- Maximum total floor space 3m x 2m x 1 m high (approx. 10ft x 6ft x 3ft)
- 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 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 normally drink approximately 10ml water per 100g bodyweight per day.

A high fibre diet should be given to rabbits in the form of hay or similar forage material. Rabbits teeth continue to grow throughout their lives, and they should be given hard gnawing material to help prevent overgrowth.

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

It's highly recommended that all rabbits are vaccinated against Myxomatosis and Viral Haemorrhagic Disease (VHD). These illnesses are common in wild rabbits, so it's important to prevent contact between wild and pet rabbits.

Rabbits should be checked daily for cleanliness, especially in warm weather. Any build-up of faeces on their fur should be removed promptly. If a rabbit needs washing, make sure they are thoroughly dried, as wet or soiled areas can attract flies, leading to fly strike and maggot infestations.

Regular checks of your rabbit's teeth and nails are also important to ensure they're not overgrown or damaged.

Finally, keep an eye on your rabbit's behaviour—any changes may be a sign of illness or pain. If you're ever concerned about their health, contact a vet immediately.

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 2.

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)

Rabbits can breed very quickly, so it's strongly recommended to neuter male rabbits. Neutering not only helps prevent unwanted litters, but it can also reduce aggressive behaviour and lower the risk of certain health issues.

For female rabbits, neutering is especially important—around 80% of unneutered females over the age of 3 develop uterine tumours, making it a vital step for their long-term health and wellbeing.

Any queries regarding this document should be directed to:

The Allotment Team

Tel 01472 324501

Allotments.enquiries@nelincs.gov.uk

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 was established to ensure the humane treatment of animals.

Anyone who is cruel to an animal, neglect it or does not look after its welfare needs, may be banned from owning animals, fined up to £20,000 and or sent to prison. If the Council have good reason to believe that a tenant has failed to meet the needs of animals kept on their allotment, they will take steps to end the tenancy and may report the Tenant to the RSPCA.

- The Tenant must be certain they have the time to care for the animals, visiting them at least once a day, every day.
- The Tenant must be confident they can afford to keep the animals.