

Croydon Council Allotments Rules for Keeping Livestock

Allotment Service, Active Lifestyles
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Keeping Livestock

1. General Conditions

In accordance with Clause (26) of the Allotment Lease Agreement, Croydon Council will allow tenants to keep hens OR rabbits as livestock on their allotment plot. Livestock kept on allotments are for the tenants own use and not for business or profit.

Any person keeping livestock on allotment land must be an allotment tenant and is bound by the Allotment Tenancy Agreement in addition to the general rules for keeping livestock on allotments below. There are additional rules and application process for beekeeping. See section 7 below.

The Council reserves the right to review these conditions as required. The Council will give livestock keepers notice before any changes to these conditions are made. The general rules for keeping livestock on allotments can be found online. www.Croydon.gov.uk To request a print copy contact allotments@croydon.gov.uk

All livestock are subject to strict welfare codes enforced by the RSPCA and DEFRA covered by the Animal Welfare Act 2006. The act states that all animals have basic needs that must be fulfilled by their owner or keeper.

The welfare of rabbits is protected by the Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007. Schedule 9 of these regulations contain specific conditions that apply to the keeping of rabbits. There is also a Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Rabbits, which continues to apply under the new Animal Welfare Act 2006.

- 1.a Permission to keep livestock on a plot is dependent on these conditions being met and the rules and guidelines being followed.
- 1.b Keeping livestock does not count as cultivation. The plot holder must guarantee that a minimum $\frac{3}{4}$ (or 75%) of the remaining allotment plot is left free to cultivate when making the application. The total area of the rabbit or hen house and run should not exceed more than 10% of the total allotment plot area. The maximum permitted size will be 10ft x 12ft.
- 1.c "Hens" excludes **cockerels or roosters** as under the Allotments Act 1950.
- 1.d The keeping of other poultry (ducks, geese, turkeys, etc.) is prohibited.
- 1e Only the registered plot holder is permitted to keep livestock on their allotments plot. When a plot holder ends the tenancy they must have arrangements be in place to remove the livestock and any associated structures at their own cost.

2. Registration & Inspection

Tenants must make an application to Croydon Council to keep livestock on their allotment plot. Details of the number of hens or rabbits and size and location of the hen house or hutch and outdoor run must be given. Personal contact details must be provided including details of who will care for your livestock or deal with emergencies if you are absent. See section 4 below and the attached livestock application form.

- 2.a Tenants are responsible for the welfare of livestock and must ensure they do not cause a nuisance to others. Please see Clause 8 in the Allotment Lease Agreement.
 - 2.b Representatives of Croydon Council have the right to inspect the livestock at any time. If the Council has cause to investigate complaints of mistreatment, any costs incurred will be passed to the tenant for payment.
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- 2c Croydon Council has the right to issue a notice if the plot holder does not comply with the Allotment Lease Agreement or the rules in this document, including nuisance to neighbours. The procedure will be the same as a "Notice to Cultivate" with a 40 day notice period. The notice may be served any time that concerns are raised about the management of livestock. If there is no improvement Croydon Council will serve a "Notice to Quit". See Section 8.

3 Risk Assessment

A risk assessment must be completed by the plot holder outlining how they intend to manage the livestock. This must include the following considerations:

- Protection against vermin
- Foxes and cats
- Disposal of dead carcasses
- Arrangements in times of temporary absence by the plot holder (See section 4 below)
- When the allotment water supply is turned off - access to drinking water
- When the allotment water supply is turned off - access to water for cleaning
- Access to drinking water in freezing weather
- Management of pesticides, ensuring livestock does not ingest.
- Preventing escaped livestock
- Preventing disease
- Vandalism
- Arrangements for removal of livestock and property when the plot holder ends their tenancy.

Highlight any other risks (please specify)

- 3.a The risk assessment forms part of the permit to keep livestock on the allotment.

4 Stand-By Arrangements

The plot holder must provide Croydon Council/ Allotment Committee, with details (name, address, telephone number and mobile telephone number) of a person who will take responsibility to deal with the care of livestock and emergencies if the plot holder is not available (the back-up keeper).

4.a Notice On Display

A notice giving contact details of the livestock keeper and a back-up 24H contact in case of absence should be displayed clearly on the chicken coop or rabbit hutch for use by Council Inspectors, the emergency services or RSPCA.

The notice will include:

Name of plot holder (livestock keeper)

Phone number

In case the plot holder is not available

Name of the back-up keeper

Phone number

- 4.b The plot holder is responsible for the welfare of livestock at all times including when livestock is under the supervision of a back-up keeper.

5 Keeping Hens

In addition to the rules below, further information on keeping hens, including mixing breeds, the ideal size of perch, house and scratching land, can be found at the British Hen Welfare Trust www.bhwt.org.uk

5.1 **The Henhouse**

A fully enclosed shelter meeting BHWT guidance is required. Note: The maximum permitted size of a structure on an allotment is 6ft x 8ft. See temporary structure rules for further information.

5.1.a The fully enclosed shelter must provide the following:

- 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.
- Be draught free but have adequate ventilation.
- Perches for sleeping.
- Nest boxes for laying eggs.

5.2 **Outdoor Run**

A fully enclosed caged run must be provided that meets the BHWT guidance

5.2a There should be an additional means of overhead shelter e.g. shrubs to provide hens with protection from direct sunlight, strong wind and driving rain.

5.2b All fences or enclosures must comply with clause (16) of the Allotment Lease Agreement

5.3 **Food & Water**

Hens should have continuous and plentiful access to cool, clean and fresh water, feed appropriate to the age and species of hen and in sufficient quantities as well as insoluble grit to aid digestion.

5.3a Food storage must be kept clean, tidy, and secure to prevent the risk of attracting rodents and other pests.

5.3b To aid the prevention of rodents and other pests the plot holder should use specific food dispensers and ensure all dispensers are cleaned regularly and any spillage cleared up as quickly as possible. There should be minimal loose grain and pellets on the ground.

5.4 **Health & Welfare**

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

5.4a Regular inspection by the plot holder must be carried out to check that all birds are behaving normally and are free of disease.

5.4b Preventative and/or veterinary inspections must be carried out at the first sign of disease to prevent a widespread outbreak.

5.4c Any serious health, longstanding or contagious issues must be reported to Croydon Council immediately as well as details on the treatment being received and notification of when the problem has cleared.

5.5 **Sanitation**

The hen house and run should be cleaned a minimum of once a week or more frequently as necessary.

5.5.a Plot holders are responsible for removing all waste from the site. Soiled bedding must not be composted anywhere on the allotment site.

Any waste must be removed according to clauses (18 & 19) of the Allotment lease agreement.

5.5.b When the allotment water supply is turned off the plot holder must ensure there is access to water for cleaning

5.6 **Number of Hens**

Poultry require companionship and ideally two or more should be kept.
The maximum number of hens permitted per plot holder is 4.

5.7 **Breeding & Profit**

Plot holders are not permitted to breed hens on the allotment site nor profit from the sale of produce (See Clause (21) of the Allotment Lease Agreement).

5.8 **Record Keeping**

The plot holder must keep records on the health and welfare of all livestock. Croydon Council's Allotments Service reserves the right to request a copy of these records.

Records should include the following:

- Date of introduction of new birds
- Date, purpose and outcome of vet visit
- Details of treatments applied
- Mortality – date and cause.

6 **Keeping Rabbits**

The Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock (PB0080) 1999 from Defra must be followed at all times.

6.1 **The Rabbit Hutch**

Housing is key to ensuring the welfare of rabbits and should allow them to behave naturally.

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

6.1.b The structures shall be sited a minimum of 3 meters from adjacent neighbouring residential properties to minimize potential nuisance.

6.1.c The fully or partially enclosed rabbit hutch or pen shall provide the following:

- Protection from predators
- Clean dry bedding material to absorb moisture and odour (e.g. wood shavings or straw).
- Warmth during the colder months and shade during the summer.
- Be draught free but have adequate ventilation.
- Provide constant access to safe hiding places.

6.2 **Outdoor Run**

A fully enclosed outdoor run that provides a minimum size of 0.75m² per rabbit.

6.2.a 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).

6.3 **Food & Water**

When the allotment water supply is turned off, arrangements for access to drinking water must be in place.

Food storage must be kept clean, tidy, and secure to prevent the risk of attracting rodents and other pests.

6.4 **Health & Welfare**

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

6.4a 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.

6.4b Vaccinations, injections and similar procedures should be undertaken by adequately qualified veterinary professionals. Care should be taken to prevent injury and unnecessary disturbance of the rabbits.

6.4c Ailing or injured rabbits should be segregated wherever possible and treated or if necessary removed from the allotment plot.

6.5 **Sanitation**

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

6.5.a Tenants are responsible for the removal of all waste from the site. Soiled bedding shall not be composted anywhere on the allotment site.

6.5.b Regular/constant access to suitable toileting places. Toilet areas should be separate from sleeping areas.

6.6 **Number of Rabbits**

The maximum number of rabbits per allotment plot is at the discretion of Croydon Council. An assessment will be made based upon the breed and projected fully grown size of the rabbits and size of plot.

6.7 **Breeding & Profit**

Plot holders are not permitted to breed rabbits on the allotment site – All rabbits must be neutered from 4 months of age. Plot holders are not permitted to keep rabbits 0-4 months of age.

6.8 **Record Keeping**

The plot holder must keep records on the health and welfare of all livestock. Croydon Council may on occasion ask to see these records.

The records should include the following:

- Date of introduction of rabbits
- Date, purpose and outcome of vet visit
- Details of treatments applied
- Mortality – date and cause.

7 **Beekeeping**

Croydon Council is committed to promoting Beekeeping within our allotments. Bees play a critical role in the pollination of plants and fruit crops contributing to higher yields and better quality of produce.

7a Bees can be only be kept on Council owned allotment sites on designated beekeeping plots.

7b Further information and an additional set of Rules and application form for beekeeping on Croydon Council allotment sites is available online at www.croydon.gov.uk or in print from allotments@croydon.gov.uk

8 **Withdrawal of Consent**

Croydon Council may withdraw the permission to keep livestock at any time by giving 40 days' notice to remove livestock and all associated structures and equipment if

- The permit holder contravenes any of the above rules.
- The permit holder contravenes any rules within the Allotment Tenancy Agreement or any separate Allotment Association or Council tenancy rules.
- Substantiated information is received that requires a review of the arrangements.

8a Any costs resulting from the withdrawal of consent shall be borne by the tenant.

9 **Useful Resources**

Please find below some useful links with livestock information.

British Bee Keepers Association(BBKA) www.bbka.org.uk

DEFRA - www.defra.gov.uk

RSPCA (particularly for rabbits) - RSPCA

Livestock Application Form

Allotment site	Plot number
Plot holder name:	Plot size:
Livestock type Hens <input type="checkbox"/> Rabbits <input type="checkbox"/>	Number:
Backup Keeper's Contact details Name: Telephone Number:	
Risk Assessment yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Date
Notice on Display yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Structure Description	Dimensions
<p>I understand that I am solely responsible for the livestock kept on my allotment plot. I agree to pay any costs incurred for removal, relocation and disposal of the Livestock at the end of my Lease agreement. I agree to pay for any damages caused to other property or plots caused by my livestock. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>All tenants are required to sign and return an application form agreeing to the Conditional Terms of Tenancy consequently agreeing to provide all the above information, adhering to the terms and conditions and undertaking a probationary period of 12 months from the date below. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>I have read and understood the rules to keep Livestock on my allotment plot. I hereby agree to comply with the above rules and regulations <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
Plot Holder Signature	Date

EVIDENCE REQUIRED	EVIDENCE ATTACHED
Risk assessment.	
Site Location Plan	
Contact details of stand-by arrangements of an alternative beekeeper who can be contacted in emergency – see section 4 above	