



**NORWICH**  
City Council

Norwich City Council

# Livestock guidance

Allotment rules  
(February 2011 version)

## Introduction

This document is designed to provide further guidance on how to care for your livestock.

Please refer to the *Allotment rules* for details of the conditions for the following.

- Keeping livestock – section 9 and appendix 4.
- Structures – section 8 and appendix 3.

# Additional legislation

Section 9 of the Animal Welfare Act of 2006 makes owners and keepers legally responsible for making sure that the welfare needs of their animals are met. Failure to comply with the act may result in criminal prosecution leading to a fine of up to £5,000 or imprisonment.\*

You should make sure that you are aware of the Animal Welfare Act and keep up to date with any changes made to the act as it develops.

The basic requirements of the act are to ensure that livestock:

- have:
  - a suitable place to live
  - a suitable diet
- are:
  - able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
  - housed either with, or apart from, other animals as applicable
  - protected from pain, injury, suffering and disease.

\*Correct at time of publication.

# Your responsibility

It is the tenant's responsibility to make sure that the *Allotment rules* and the Animal Welfare Act are adhered to.

The tenant is responsible for the welfare of livestock in an emergency such as a fire or flood.

The tenant remains responsible for any livestock kept on the plot they rent including any kept by helpers.

Any livestock health issues which are serious, longstanding or contagious must be reported to Norwich City Council as soon as possible, along with details of treatment being received. You must also notify us when the problem has gone.

If the council has to call in a vet or other official expert to deal with cases of neglect, mistreatment or control then the costs will be passed on to the allotment tenant who rents the plot where the animals are kept.

# General welfare requirements

All species of livestock (except bees) require:

- continuous, ready access to an adequate supply of clean and fresh drinking water
- the provision of a sufficient quantity of appropriate food to maintain good health and satisfy nutritional needs
- light during the hours of daylight
- protection from rodents, pests and predators
- continuous access to shelter
- a large enough area of clean dry, bedding for lying or roosting on
- an adequate space and environment for exercise, feeding, dunging and natural behaviour (continuously muddy conditions can cause ill health and discomfort)
- adequate protection from the weather
- accommodation designed and maintained so as to avoid injury or distress
- fencing to protect against predators and ensure that they cannot escape or become trapped
- competent care and management from the allotment holder
- to be housed, handled and transported in a way which causes minimum stress
- at least a daily visit by a competent person
- appropriate treatment from a vet to be made available
- company of their own kind

## Keeping hens

You do not need to apply for permission to keep hens but must inform us of your intention to do so. However you must apply for permission to build a structure such as a henhouse or run. Cockerels are not allowed on allotment sites.

The RCPA recommend a floor space of 0.4m<sup>2</sup> per bird which equates to 12 birds in a hen house built to the maximum permitted size. Access to clean water must be provided at all times.

For more detailed guidance on the welfare of hens please refer to the RSPCA guidance on keeping chickens as pets available from its website (see the list of links at the end of this document). Please contact us if you do not have access to the internet and we will provide a printed copy. You should check from time to time to make sure that you have the most up to date information. You must meet these guidelines in order to comply with the Animal Welfare Act.

## Keeping rabbits

You do not need to apply for permission to keep rabbits but must inform us of your intention to do so. However, you must apply for permission to build a structure such as a rabbit run and a rabbit hutch must meet the recommendations made by the RSPCA.

Rabbits need companionship and normally prefer to be with other rabbits, they are also athletic and need plenty of exercise. Access to clean water must be provided at all times and the housing cleaned regularly.

For more detailed guidance please refer to the RSPCA guidance on rabbits available from its website (see the list of links at the end of this document). Please contact us if you don't have access to the internet and we will provide a printed copy. You should check from time to time to make sure that you have the most up to date information. You must meet these needs in order to comply with the Animal Welfare Act.

# Keeping bees

You must not keep bees until you have been given permission in writing by the city council. Please see the *Allotment rules* for the conditions on keeping livestock and bees.

You should not bring any bees on to, or purchase any equipment for your plot until you have received written permission from the council to do so.

## Things to consider

- You should consider whether bee hives can be placed on your plot without causing a nuisance to others and without attracting vandalism. Hives should be as unobtrusive as possible. The area needs to be accessible enough to allow manipulations to be carried out without working in the bees' flight path.
- Hives must be located near the centre of the plot and not next to a boundary, unless the boundary is next to an area in which no nuisance is likely to be caused; ie not a garden, another plot, a path, a park or a communal area. A railway line, river or natural area would be acceptable.
- If your plot is next to a road, public footpath or cycleway, permission is unlikely to be granted.
- If the environment is suitable and there is an adequate forage area for honey bees.
- If there is access convenient for you.
- You will need to have access to protective clothing and be prepared to visit the allotment regularly to check on the bees.
- There is a maximum limit of three hives per acre and the council reserves the right to reduce this figure.

- The number of hives permitted for an individual plot will depend upon the demand from other allotment holders on the site but will be no more than three per tenant of a full sized (250m<sup>2</sup>) plot.
- A water supply must be provided on the plot close to the hives.
- A 2 metre high screen or other physical barrier should enclose the hives so that the bees are encouraged to fly at that height when leaving or approaching the hive.
- The council reserves the right to refuse an allotment holder the right to keep bees. For example, if it is considered that the plot or the site is in an unsuitable position.
- The council reserves the right to request that beehives are removed. For example, if the presence of the bees is found to be causing a nuisance to other people.

## How to apply

Any tenant given permission to keep bees must have a formal qualification in beekeeping, such as the BBA basic exam. The beekeeper must have a minimum of one year's experience of handling and keeping bees before taking the basic exam.

Both practical and theory beekeeping courses are available at Easton College.

The tenant must maintain annual insurance of £5 million cover which can be achieved through being a paid up member of the local beekeepers association or The British Beekeepers' Association.

The beekeeper must be competent to recognise signs of swarming and carry out regular inspections for these. The beekeeper must be competent to carry out effective swarm control measures and carry them out when signs of swarming occur.



If you satisfy the above requirements you should request an application form to keep bees. You will need to supply a sketch showing the proposed location of each hive and the position of the screen or barrier and the water supply.

Once an application has been received a notice will be posted on the site and/or plot for one month allowing comments to be made by other allotment holders.

If you are given permission to keep bees you must comply with the rules and conditions in the Allotment rules together with the guidance in this supplement.

## Keeping bees

All beekeepers must register with the National Bee Unit which entitles you to a free apiary inspection visit from the local bee inspector and up to date information and web resources.

Honey bees are susceptible to a number of serious infectious diseases, some of which must be reported to DEFRA. Regional bee inspectors have the right to access hives to deal with disease and to survey the extent of the spread to or from other colonies. Standstill or destruction notices can be issued and the beekeeper must co-operate as fully as possible.

Manipulations may only be carried out when there are not, or not likely to be, other people close by before the bees have settled again.

If the bees are unnecessarily aggressive they should be re-queened with a queen from a reputable supplier of docile strains. The deliberate introduction of aggressive strains of bees will constitute a breach of your tenancy agreement and could result in the termination of your tenancy or a ban on keeping livestock, including bees, on your allotment plot.

# Keeping livestock on your allotment useful links

## Guidance notes:

[www.rspca.org.uk/allaboutanimals](http://www.rspca.org.uk/allaboutanimals)

## Animal Welfare Act:

[www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2006a](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2006a)

[www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmanimal/welfare/act/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmanimal/welfare/act/index.htm)

## Beekeeping:

[www.norfolkbeekeepers.co.uk](http://www.norfolkbeekeepers.co.uk)

[www.easton-college.ac.uk/courses](http://www.easton-college.ac.uk/courses) (search part-time)

<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/index.cfm>





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Norwich City Council  
City Hall · Norwich · NR2 1NH  
[www.norwich.gov.uk](http://www.norwich.gov.uk)