

Briefing Note.

Item 10.1

Chickens on the Allotments

We have had a request from an allotment holder regarding keeping chickens on their allotment plot.

The allotment agreement states the following:

During the tenancy, the tenant shall

c) not keep livestock, poultry or bees in the Allotment Garden other than reasonable numbers of hens or rabbits which shall not be kept for a business or a trade.

We have not had a request for chickens before on the allotment, so we have researched the recent allotment guidelines from The National Allotment Society.

Their advice is as follows:

Hens on allotments

Under the 1950 Allotment Act, the keeping of hens and rabbits is permitted on allotments and viewed as an allotment holder's right, so long as they are for the tenants own use and not for business or profit. However please do check your tenancy agreement first, as in some circumstances your landlord may have included a clause relating to the keeping of animals, especially if they are a private landlord, for example a farmer.

The keeping of bees, pigs, goats and other livestock is subject to the landlord's permission - please check your tenancy agreement.

If any animal on an allotment is deemed a nuisance, health hazard or their well-being is affected then they can be removed. All livestock is subject to strict welfare codes enforced by the RSPCA and DEFRA and covered by the Animal Welfare Act. The Act states that all animals have basic needs that must be fulfilled by their owner or keeper. If you are found guilty of neglect of an animal in your care by causing unnecessary suffering or failing to provide a suitable diet or living conditions, then you may have to serve a prison sentence.

Click on the link to download a leaflet produced by the RSPCA [Welfare of animals on allotments](#) this guidance contains information about the specific needs of different species. [Click here](#) to view the NAS leaflet about Hens and Rabbits on plots.

Hens

- When referring to hens, the law means the female of the species and excludes cockerels. Often cockerels are covered by local by-laws, excluding them from allotments because of the noise they make – if you are in any doubt please seek guidance from your landlord or local authority.
- We would recommend any tenant who is considering keeping hens, keeps no more than is needed for their own personal use. As a guide, a point-of-lay hen might lay up to five eggs in any week, so the average family would require no more than 2 or 3 hens. You will also need to ask your landlord and local authority about the hen-keeping policy on the site.
- DEFRA regulations stipulate that any flock of 50 hens or above must be registered with them. However please remember hens cannot be kept for commercial gain.
- Further information on keeping hens, including the ideal size of perch, house and scratching land, can be found at the British Hen Welfare Trust www.bhwt.org.uk