

## CONDITIONS AND GUIDELINES APPLICABLE TO THE KEEPING OF POULTRY ON ALLOTMENT SITES

### General

The term “poultry” includes hens, table poultry (chickens), turkeys, geese, ducks and quail.

**Birmingham City Council Allotment Rules only permit hens to be kept on allotments (Rule 7.3). For the purpose of these Guidelines, poultry specifically means hens.**

Poultry may be kept in a wide variety of conditions ranging from “free-range” to environmentally controlled systems accommodating 5,000 birds or more.

Whatever the system, the most important factor is the welfare of the animals themselves;

comfort and shelter;

readily accessible fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour;

freedom of movement;

the opportunity to exercise normal behavioural patterns;

light during the hours of daylight and a means of inspecting the birds at any other time.

the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of vice, injury, parasitic infection and disease; and

emergency arrangements in the event of fire, flood, electrical failure.

### Allotment Sites

The following conditions will apply;

#### 1. The Stockperson

This person will be experienced in the overall keeping and management of poultry. The larger the flock of birds the greater the skills required, particularly in respect of recognising distress or disease and taking appropriate remedial action. The stockperson will have obtained a copy of the **Code of Recommendation for the Welfare of Domestic Fowls from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)**.

2. Accommodation

This should provide proper shelter from the elements and, as appropriate, a means of exercise which may be extended by the provision of wire fenced runs. A means of access to the shelter must be available to the poultry at all times, except where cleaning and disinfection etc., is being carried out. Any shelter should permit the stockperson to stand and inspect the birds therein. The accommodation will require cleansing and disinfection and all litter etc., needs to be disposed of in secure containers or located well away from any shelter or run. Nest boxes, roosting areas and perches must be properly located. Floors shall be provided of wooden construction. All exercise runs shall be escape and predator proof.

3. Ventilation

Sufficient fresh air should be provided by means of doors or other apertures. Birds should be protected from draughts and it is recommended that the accommodation/shelter entry points due south. During hot weather, particularly warm humid conditions, all birds must have access to an exercise area. In certain cases shading may be required.

4. Lighting

A means of artificial lighting must be provided, which is adequate to inspect all birds on the site. Poultry must have access to a minimum of 8 hours daylight during any day.

5. Feeding and Watering

Water must be available at all times and all equipment kept clean and in good order. Feed should be kept in vermin proof containers. Any diet must be properly balanced for the type of bird and given in sufficient amounts to ensure the proper well being of the animals. The risk of drinking water freezing during winter months must be considered.

6. Stocking Rates

All poultry must be able to stand, turn round and stretch their wings, and have sufficient space to perch or sit down without interference from other birds. The stocking rate will not only be dependent upon the ability of the stock person, but also the type of poultry kept. It is recommended that the following rates apply:-

hens – not more than 7 birds/m<sup>2</sup>

All poultry must have access to an exercise area.

7. Fire Precautions

Plans for dealing with fire should be made. All inflammable materials i.e. straw, waste litter and empty bags, must be stored well away from poultry accommodation and exercise areas. A means of controlling any small fire should be available and the stockperson's (or deputy) emergency telephone number and contact address known to the site operator and/or landowner.

8. Frequency of Inspection

All birds must be inspected at least twice daily. The stockperson/site operator must allow the Council's animal welfare representative to inspect the poultry at any time.

9. Contact

The name and telephone number of the stockperson or his/her contact details must be displayed at the entrance to the tenant's plot.

10. Disease Control

Any sick or injured birds must be removed immediately and treatment provided. The name and address of the Veterinary Surgeon must be known to the site operator.

The cause of any disease or injury will be identified and remedial action taken.

Any national disease prevention and/or control programmes must be adhered to.

11. Cleansing and Disinfection

The accommodation and associated equipment should be regularly cleaned and disinfected. It is advisable to de-stock sites and allow a minimum 7 days rest period. Only good quality litter originating from premises where poultry are not kept should be used.

12. Transport

Any container used to transport poultry should be clean, in good repair and of a type suitable for the type of bird to be moved. All birds must be handled with due care. **The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006** lays down provisions with regard to the loading, transport and unloading of poultry.

13. Improvement Notice

Where it is deemed necessary, in the interest of the welfare of any bird kept, to effect improvements to the accommodation or overall management of a site, Notice will be served accordingly. In certain circumstances immediate rectification may be directed.

14. Other General Points

Land on which birds are kept may become 'fowl-sick'. The time this may take will depend upon stocking rates, soil type and drainage. Muddy conditions lead to ill-health and discomfort.

In addition;

- precautions to protect against foxes, dogs, cats, rodents and other predators must be taken.
- no poultry may be kept for the purpose of fighting;
- no poultry may be kept within 50m of a dwelling;
- no poultry shall be a nuisance to residents and others who seek enjoyment from the environment in which they live or work;
- dead birds must be disposed of in accordance with the **Animal By-Products Regulations 2005**.

Advice on the construction of buildings and general management is available from the **Council's Animal Welfare Team (tel: 0121 303 9917)**.