

Environmental Health

Cockerels and Chickens



There has been an increase in people keeping chickens at home in recent years and occasionally also a cockerel. This is usually as a result of buying birds before knowing what gender they are.

It is not generally viewed as a sensible idea to keep cockerels when you live in an urban area as they can be noisy and it is not a noise that most people in towns would be expecting to hear.

I own a cockerel – what can I do to reduce the chances of disturbing my neighbours?

Here is some practical advice if you own, or would like to keep a cockerel:



- **Please consider whether you really need a cockerel** - hens will still lay eggs without one.
- Check the property title deeds to make sure you are allowed to keep poultry
- Check whether you need planning permission for the enclosure the bird is kept in
- Competition – Other cockerels in the area will cause them to compete with each other and may result in even more crowing
- Housing – Coop the cockerel and keep the coop as dark as possible to minimise early morning crowing as a cockerels will crow as soon as they see light. You could try covering the coop to trick them into thinking it is still night
- The coop ceiling could be lowered to prevent the cockerel throwing its head back to crow
- Location – try to house the bird(s) as far away from your neighbours as possible to reduce the likelihood of complaints
- Prevent smells and infestation of rats and mice by cleaning out the enclosure frequently

If I am disturbed by a cockerel – what should I do?

The owner of the cockerel may be genuinely unaware that their animal is causing a disturbance and therefore speaking to your neighbours may be the quickest and most effective means of resolving matters.

If this isn't successful, contact Environmental Health and we will record your complaint.

What will we do?

First we will ask you to complete diary sheets to record details of how and when the cockerel is disturbing you. This must be done in all cases as it tells us:

- How long the crowing lasts – it is more likely that the law will consider nuisance is being caused if the cockerel is crowing for long periods
- When it is happening – it is more likely the law will consider nuisance is being caused if the cockerel is crowing at unsocial hours i.e. night, early morning or late evening.
- How long it happens for– the more often the crowing affects you, the more likely the law will consider it as a nuisance.

When we have this information, we will discuss with you the options that are available. For example we may decide to visit in person to witness the disturbance. However, this is not always possible due to the unsocial hours. Therefore we may choose instead to install noise recording equipment.

If we are satisfied after a period of time that a statutory nuisance exists under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, a notice may be served requiring that the nuisance is stopped. This does not necessarily mean stopping the noise altogether. It can include reducing it to an acceptable level.