



Rabbit Welfare
Association
& Fund

The reality of small hutches.



Treacle is a Rex rabbit, this is an average sized rabbit, not a giant. **Her body fills the whole living area of the hutch.** She certainly can't stretch and run freely, and there are no toys, food bowl, hay rack in here. **In reality, all she can do is sit, and because the hutch is so small she is exposed to all of the weather conditions,** be that wind, rain or hot sun. This is a bad design as well as size because of the wire on 2 sides, the rabbit has very little shelter in here.



This is why a hutch needs to be a minimum of 2ft deep. This is after one night of rain, the hutch is wet, the bedding would be wet and the rabbits would have to stay in the tiny bedroom area, where they usually go to the toilet, or sit in the damp bedding. Some of the depth is lost because of the ramp, so only a few inches of dry floor space is available. The rabbits can't escape the weather and elements in a hutch like this. So the floor space needs to be 2ft from front to back excluding the ramp area in a hutch of this design.



A hutch should accommodate 2 rabbits comfortably because they should be kept with the company of their own kind, and allow them to make 3 hops, lie stretched out and be able to stretch up freely. This is a 6ft x 2ft x 2ft hutch.



And this is why **a hutch needs to be at least 2ft tall, so that the rabbit can stretch up freely,** and to perform normal behaviours.



This is a good environment for rabbits—a 6ft hutch and 8ft run connected via a tunnel system. See how the rabbits have two completely separate areas joined by a tunnel? It's in a rabbit's nature to explore and this system is ideal.



This is the RWAFF minimum recommended set up compared to a small hutch!

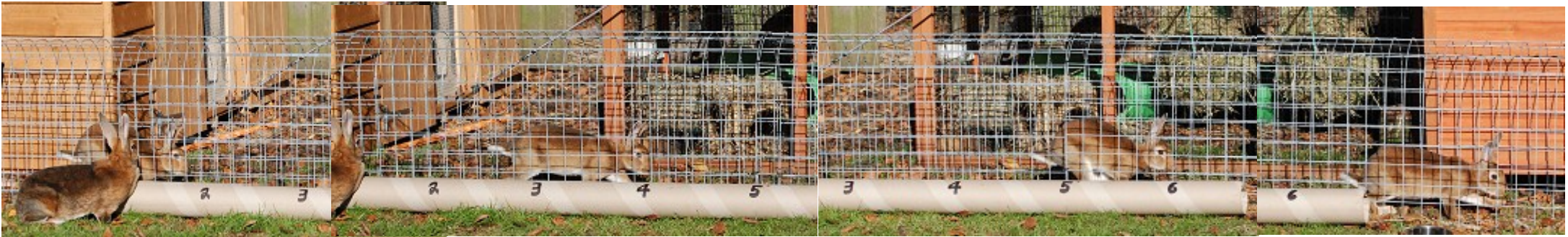


This is what the RWAFF and PDSA think is the minimum set up for rabbits—a 6 x 2 x 2 ft hutch and an 8ft run.

The run has room for toys, digging places, and tunnels. Rabbits can run and display natural behaviours in here.



The reality of small hutches.



A hutch is not enough.

Quite simply keeping a rabbit alone in a hutch without the opportunity to exercise, display natural behaviour or without companionship is not acceptable. It does not meet any of the animals fundamental requirements, or any of the owners requirements under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. hutch needs to be as large as possible.

It is commonly accepted that a hutch should allow a rabbit to do 3 hops (notsteps) This is a requirement for owners in Wales, under the Animal Welfare Act 2006

At rest Treacle (front) takes up 1 ft, one hop would take her to at least 2 ft, 2 hops to 3ft and 3 hops to 4ft so 4ft is the minimum to allow 3 hops. Look at Dexter behind, it takes him 6ft to take 3 unrestricted hops.

A hutch 1.2m long, and 0.45m wide gives a floor area of 0.54m²—which is the Home Office requirement for lab rabbits. Lab rabbits may only spend a few weeks in these cages. It's not too much to ask that retailers and owners don't sell or buy anything smaller than this for pet rabbits who may live 10 years in them, is it? **Please don't sell or buy anything smaller than 122cms x 61cms x 61 cms (4ft x 2ft x 2ft) and remember an attached exercise run.**