

## Avian influenza (bird flu): Latest situation

New housing measures will come into force in England, Scotland and Wales on 14 December.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/avian-influenza-bird-flu-national-prevention-zone-declared>

The Chief Veterinary Officers for England, Scotland and Wales have agreed to bring in new measures to help protect poultry and captive birds, following a number of cases of avian influenza in both wild and captive birds in the UK.

Government Chief Veterinary Officers are encouraging bird keepers to use the next 11 days to prepare for new housing measures, including taking steps to safeguard animal welfare, consult their vet and where necessary put up additional housing.

Whether you keep just a few birds as pets or thousands, from 14 December onwards you will be legally required to keep your birds indoors, or take appropriate steps to keep them separate from wild birds. We have not taken this decision lightly, but it is the best way to protect your birds from this highly infectious disease.

Poultry and captive bird keepers are advised to be vigilant for any signs of disease in their birds and any wild birds, and seek prompt advice from their vet if they have any concerns. They can help prevent avian flu by maintaining good biosecurity on their premises, including:

- housing or netting all poultry and captive birds
- cleansing and disinfecting clothing, footwear, equipment and vehicles before and after contact with poultry and captive birds – if practical, use disposable protective clothing
- reducing the movement of people, vehicles or equipment to and from areas where poultry and captive birds are kept, to minimise contamination from manure, slurry and other products, and using effective vermin control
- thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting housing at the end of a production cycle
- keeping fresh disinfectant at the right concentration at all points where people should use it, such as farm entrances and before entering poultry and captive bird housing or enclosures
- minimising direct and indirect contact between poultry and captive birds and wild birds, including making sure all feed and water is not accessible to wild birds

### Register your birds

We encourage all keepers to register their birds with us so we can contact you quickly if there is a disease outbreak in your area and you need to take action.

If you have more than 50 birds, you are legally required to register your flock within one month of their arrival at your premises. If you have less than 50 birds, including pet birds, you are still strongly encouraged to register.

Find out how to register your birds

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/poultry-including-game-birds-registration-rules-and-forms>

Poultry and captive bird keepers and members of the public should report dead wild birds to the Defra helpline on 03459 33 55 77 (option 7), and keepers should report suspicion of disease to APHA on 03000 200 301. Keepers should familiarise themselves with our avian flu advice.

Public Health England advise the risk to public health from the H5N8 and H5N2 strains of bird flu is very low.

The Food Standards Agency has said that on the basis of the current scientific evidence, avian influenza poses a very low food safety risk for UK consumers. Properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs, are safe to eat.