

All Wales Prevention Zone declared to protect poultry from Avian Flu

The Prevention Zone will come into force from 00:01 on 25 January 2018.

In January, there have been three separate findings in England of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N6 in Wild Birds and in response Defra issued a Prevention Zone across England.

A veterinary risk assessment for England and Wales shows that the risk level for disease in wild birds has increased from Medium to High. The risk associated with direct and indirect transmission to poultry has also increased from Low to Medium. The risk to poultry, however, is dependent on the level of biosecurity at individual sites.

Although there are currently no findings of Avian Influenza in Wales, as a precautionary measure in response to the increased risk level, an All Wales Avian Prevention Zone will be introduced.

The prevention zone will require all keepers of poultry and other captive birds, irrespective of how they are kept, to take appropriate and practicable steps, including:

- ensure the areas where birds are kept are unattractive to wild birds, for example by netting ponds, and by removing wild bird food sources
- feed and water your birds in enclosed areas to discourage wild birds
- minimise movement of people in and out of bird enclosures
- clean and disinfect footwear and keep areas where birds live clean and tidy
- reduce any existing contamination by cleansing and disinfecting concrete areas, and fencing off wet or boggy areas.

Keepers with more than 500 birds will also be required to take some extra biosecurity measures, including restricting access to non-essential people, changing clothing and footwear before entering bird enclosures and cleaning and disinfecting vehicles.

Cabinet Secretary said:

“As a precautionary measure, in response to the increased risk level, and to mitigate the risk of infection, I am declaring an All Wales Avian Influenza Prevention Zone.

“Although we have had, as yet, no findings of Avian Influenza in 2018, I consider this Prevention Zone and the requirement for enhanced biosecurity to be proportionate to the risk level faced in Wales. It is essential we take steps to protect our poultry industry, international trade and the wider economy in Wales.”

Chief Veterinary Officer Christianne Glossop said:

“All keepers of poultry and other captive birds will need to comply with the requirements of the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone.

Keepers must remain vigilant for signs of disease and practice the very highest levels of biosecurity.

“I strongly encourage all poultry keepers, even those with fewer than 50 birds, to provide their details to the Poultry Register. This will ensure they can be contacted immediately, via email or text update, in an avian disease outbreak, enabling them to protect their flock at the earliest opportunity and minimise the spread of infection.”

Avian influenza is a notifiable disease and any suspicion should be reported immediately to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)

Information on the requirements of the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone, guidance and latest developments are all available on the [Welsh Government](#) website.