

Avian Influenza – Winter 2017 / 2018

The UK is currently free from Avian Influenza (H5N8), but there is a constant risk the disease may arrive, especially now the bird migration season is underway. The current risk of incursion in the UK is **medium** for wild birds and **low** for poultry, although this depends on levels of biosecurity on individual premises.

The Chief Veterinary Officer is advising all poultry keepers in Wales, from small backyard flocks to large commercial premises, to review their biosecurity, sign up for disease alerts and register their birds with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA). Keepers are also reminded they must report any unexplained deaths or sickness to their vet.

The advice from Public Health Wales is the risk to public health from Avian Flu remains very low and the Food Standards Agency has made clear the disease does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers.

The Chief Veterinary Officer said:

“The wild bird migration season is well under way. This means birds will be arriving into the UK from areas where we know Avian Flu is present.

“I can not stress enough the importance of poultry keepers continuing to practice the very highest levels of biosecurity. Even when birds are housed, there remains a risk of infection and keepers of poultry and other captive birds should ensure every effort is made to prevent contact with wild birds. The movement of poultry should be minimised, and clothing and equipment should always be disinfected.”

“If you are concerned about the health of your birds you should seek advice from your veterinary surgeon. If you suspect your birds have AI, you should report it to your local [Animal and Plant Health Agency](#) (external link) office immediately.”

If members of the public find dead wild waterfowl (swans, geese or ducks) or gulls, or five or more dead wild birds of other species in the same location, they should report them to the Defra helpline on: 03459 33 55 77 or email: defra.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk. This service covers the whole of GB.

All keepers are encouraged to register their poultry. It is a legal requirement to register if keepers have premises with 50 or more birds. Keepers of premises with fewer than 50 birds are encouraged to [register voluntarily](#) (external link).

Keepers are advised to sign up for [disease alerts](#) (external link).

More information on Avian Influenza, the current situation in Wales and across the UK and advice for backyard keepers, including on biosecurity is available on the [Welsh Government's website](#).