

Chief Vet warns rescue charities to follow documentation requirements

Animal rehoming charities were today urged to ensure any rescued animals enter the country with the necessary vaccination paperwork after an illegal movement of Ukrainian dogs was discovered by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), risking the UK's rabies-free status.

Follow-up border checks by the APHA showed a shipment of 19 animals imported by a rescue charity travelled on falsified rabies documentation. The dogs had been rehomed and fostered by families across Great Britain, but local authorities and APHA are now tracing the animals to protect public health and ensure we remain rabies free. The animals are being placed in quarantine while a further decision is made on their disease risk level.

The UK's strict animal control strategies are central to our animal health standards which are second to none. We have long been rabies-free and wish to remain so and to protect the public from diseases and pathogens which can be brought to the UK by animals which have not received the correct health preparations to travel.

UK Chief Veterinary Officer Christine Middlemiss said:

Checks have confirmed that these animals did not receive the necessary blood tests to enter the UK. We are taking quick action to limit the risk of disease spreading by quarantining all animals involved in this case until further notice. We are grateful for the cooperation of the households involved and would encourage the public to contact us with any information they may have.

Animals without the correct vaccinations pose a real disease threat to both our own beloved animals and to people whilst also impacting the rabies-free status we have held for many years.

Earlier this month, the Government confirmed new emergency support for those fleeing Ukraine with their pets. Using an emergency licence, people fleeing the country can bring their pets to the UK with any quarantine costs fully covered.

There is a limited amount of quarantine facilities in the UK and we will prioritise those fleeing Ukraine who wish to bring their pets with them, rather than animals being brought over on a commercial basis, including rescue imports. [Commercial imports](#), including rescue imports, must follow the [usual process](#) and ensure correct vaccination documents are in place.

Before arrival, people leaving Ukraine or their carrier should contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency at pettravel@apha.gov.uk or call +44 3000 200

301 option 2. They will then be able to confirm their approval for their emergency licence and organise any necessary stay in quarantine which is required to complete the rabies risk management process.

If you believe you have taken in a Ukrainian pet from this charity, please contact the APHA helpline on 03000 200 301 to help ensure they can be quarantined as soon as possible.