

[Housing order introduced in Norfolk, Suffolk and parts of Essex to protect poultry and captive birds](#)

Mandatory housing measures for all poultry and captive birds in Norfolk, Suffolk and parts of Essex are to be introduced from 00:01 on 12th October, following a decision by the United Kingdom's Chief Veterinary Officer.

The housing order legally requires all bird keepers in these hotspots to keep their birds indoors and to follow stringent biosecurity measures to help protect their flocks from the disease, regardless of type or size. Bird keepers are advised to consult the [interactive map](#) to check if they are impacted and should then read the [new regional AIPZ with housing measure declaration](#) which sets out the requirements in Norfolk, Suffolk and parts of Essex.

The Chief Veterinary Officer is now encouraging all bird keepers in the affected regions to use the next five days to prepare, including taking steps to safeguard animal welfare, consult their private vet and expand housing where necessary.

The new housing measures build on the strengthened biosecurity measures that were brought in as part of the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) last month, covering Norfolk, Suffolk and parts of Essex. The AIPZ means that all bird keepers need to take extra precautions, such as restricting access for non-essential people on site, ensuring workers change clothing and footwear before entering bird enclosures and cleaning and disinfecting vehicles regularly to limit the risk of the disease spreading.

Over the last year, the United Kingdom has faced its largest ever outbreak of avian influenza with over 160 cases confirmed since late October 2021. The introduction of the housing measures comes after the disease was detected at 16 premises in the affected areas since the beginning of September, as well as several reports in wild birds.

The United Kingdom's Chief Veterinary Officer Christine Middlemiss said:

We are seeing a growing number of bird flu cases on commercial farms and in backyard birds across Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex, and expect the risk to continue rise over the coming months as migratory birds return to the UK.

We are now taking further action to help protect flocks from this highly infectious and devastating disease. Keepers in these hotspots must continue to follow strict biosecurity standards to protect their flock, and should use the next few days to prepare and move their birds indoors.

The housing measure means bird keepers in the affected area must:

- housing or netting all poultry and captive birds
- cleanse and disinfect clothing, footwear, equipment and vehicles before and after contact with poultry and captive birds – if practical, use disposable protective clothing
- reduce 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 use effective vermin control
- keep records of mortality, movement of poultry and poultry products and any changes in production
- thoroughly cleanse and disinfect housing on a continuous basis
- keep fresh disinfectant at the right concentration at all farm and poultry housing entry and exit points
- minimise 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
- prevent access by poultry to ponds and watercourses and ensure that birds are kept in fenced or enclosed areas

The UK Health Security Agency continue to advise that the risk to public health from the virus is very low and the Food Standards Agency advice remains unchanged, that avian influenzas pose a very low food safety risk for UK consumers. Properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs, are safe to eat.

The regionalised housing measures will remain in force in Norfolk, Suffolk and parts of Essex until further notice.

A regional AIPZ without housing measures remains in force in Cornwall, Devon, Isles of Scilly and parts of Somerset. The need to introduce mandatory housing measures as part of the AIPZ in force in the south west or further national AIPZs with or without housing will be kept under regular review as part of the government's work to protect flocks.

Keepers should report suspicion of disease in their birds to APHA on 03000 200 301. Keepers should familiarise themselves with our [avian influenza advice](#).

Defra has also set out practical guidance to support land managers, the public and ornithological and environmental organisations in their response to the growing threat of avian influenza to wild birds. The ['Mitigation Strategy for Avian Influenza in Wild Birds in England and Wales'](#) sets out how these groups, together with the government and its delivery partners, can mitigate the impact of avian influenza on wild bird populations whilst protecting public health, the wider environment and the rural economy.