

[Press release: Update on measures to protect poultry against avian flu](#)

The UK Chief Veterinary Officer has confirmed that measures currently in place to reduce the risk of Avian Influenza will be [lifted as planned across most of England](#) from 15 May 2017. However, they will remain in place in targeted areas of Lancashire, Cumbria and Merseyside following evidence of heightened risk in these areas.

The [latest risk assessment](#) published by Defra finds overall risk across England has not increased, but there is a heightened risk in parts of Lancashire, Cumbria and Merseyside, where recent [confirmed cases in the Wyre district](#) provide evidence that infection is still either circulating in wild resident birds or present in the environment.

To minimise the risk of disease spreading in this area, a new, targeted Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) will be introduced covering the districts of Barrow-in-Furness, South Lakeland, Lancaster, Blackpool, Wyre, Fylde, Preston, Sefton, West Lancashire, South Ribble and Chorley. This will replace the England-wide AIPZ that we previously announced would be lifted from 15 May.

The new localised AIPZ will require keepers to continue to observe existing mandatory disease prevention measures such as minimising movement in and out of bird enclosures, cleaning footwear, keeping areas where birds live clean and tidy and feeding birds indoors. It will remain under review.

Poultry gatherings in the localised AIPZ area will continue to be banned, and keepers from the area will not be able to take their poultry to gatherings elsewhere.

The risk in these parts of Lancashire, Cumbria and Merseyside is considered higher because the region is home to significant wild waterfowl populations and there have been previous outbreaks of H5N8 throughout this area. Recent cases in backyard flocks provide evidence that infection is still either circulating in wild resident birds or present in the environment.

An AIPZ requiring keepers to observe strict disease prevention measures and a [ban on poultry gatherings](#) have been in place across England since December 2016. From 15 May 2017, keepers across most of England will no longer be required by law to follow these measures. They should continue to follow industry standard best practice on biosecurity, including minimising movement in and out of bird enclosures, cleaning footwear, keeping areas where birds live clean and tidy and feeding birds indoors. Poultry gatherings can resume in all areas outside the remaining AIPZ, but poultry from the affected districts of Lancashire, Cumbria and Merseyside will not be able to attend.

The Government will continue to review all disease control measures based on the latest scientific evidence and veterinary advice.

Further information

1. This announcement follows [plans set out earlier this month](#).
2. The new AIPZ will cover the districts of Barrow-in-Furness, South Lakeland, Lancaster, Blackpool, Wyre, Fylde, Preston, Sefton, West Lancashire, South Ribble and Chorley. From 15 May you will be able to check if you are affected using the [interactive map](#)
3. The Government continually reviews disease control measures in light of new scientific evidence and veterinary advice. The [latest assessment](#) from Defra is that overall risk in England remains 'low', comparable with risk levels in November 2016, and should continue to fall in warmer, drier spring weather conditions. Based on this assessment, the decision has been taken to lift the ban on gatherings and the Avian Flu Prevention Zone across most of England from 15 May.
4. Latest [news and advice for keepers](#)
5. Members of the public should report dead wild birds, such as swans, geese, ducks, gulls or birds of prey, to the Defra helpline on 03459 33 55 77. Defra will then collect some of these birds and test them to help us understand how the disease is distributed geographically and in different types of bird.
6. Public Health England advises the risk to public health is very low and the Food Standards Agency has said there is no food safety risk for UK consumers.