

Press release: Updated measures to protect poultry against Avian Flu

All poultry in England are to be allowed outside from Thursday 13 April 2017 following updated evidence on the risk posed by wild birds, the UK's Chief Veterinary Officer has announced.

The requirement to keep poultry in Higher Risk Areas of England housed or completely enclosed in netting, introduced to minimise the risk of them catching avian flu from wild birds, will be lifted. However, all keepers in England will continue to be required to comply with strict biosecurity measures. A ban on poultry gatherings also remains in force until further notice.

The decision to lift the additional requirements in the Higher Risk areas is based on the latest scientific evidence and veterinary advice, which concludes that the level of risk to poultry in the Higher Risk Areas has now reduced to the same level as that across the rest of England. This is because of changes in the wild bird population: the majority of over-wintering migratory birds have now left the UK, and resident wild waterfowl are at their lowest levels and entering the breeding season when they become less likely to move long distances to forage for food.

The risk of poultry becoming infected from H5N8 remains heightened and countries across Europe continue to experience outbreaks and observe cases in wild birds. Defra is stepping up surveillance of wild birds across the UK to inform our risk assessments.

All poultry keepers must continue to take steps to reduce the risk to their birds, including minimising movement in and out of bird enclosures, cleaning footwear, keeping areas where birds live clean and tidy and feeding birds indoors.

Chief Veterinary Officer Nigel Gibbens said:

We continually review our disease control measures in light of new scientific evidence and veterinary advice. Based on the latest evidence on reduced numbers of migratory and resident aquatic wild birds we believe that kept birds in the areas we previously designated as Higher Risk are now at the same level of risk as the rest of England and may now be let outside.

However, all keepers must still observe strict disease prevention measures to reduce the risk of contamination from the environment, where the virus can survive for several weeks in bird droppings.

This does not mean business as usual: the risk from avian flu has not gone away and a Prevention Zone remains in place, requiring keepers across England to take steps to prevent disease spreading.

We continue to keep measures under review and keepers should check GOV.UK for regular updates.

Lifting the housing requirement in Higher Risk Areas means free range birds across every part of England can now be allowed outside again.

[H5N8 avian flu has been found in wild and farmed birds in the UK since December 2016](#), including chickens, turkeys, ducks and geese. Where avian flu has been confirmed, we have taken swift action to limit the spread of disease with restrictions around affected premises and full investigations to determine the source of infection.

H5N8 can be spread indirectly via the contaminated environment, for example in wild bird droppings, contaminated feed or bedding, as well as being passed from wild birds to poultry directly from bird to bird. All disease control measures continue to be kept under review depending on the latest scientific advice and disease outbreak situation.

Further information

1. Read [guidance on how to continue to comply with the Prevention Zone](#) currently in place across England.
2. Read the [latest veterinary risk assessment for Avian Influenza H5N8 in the UK and Europe](#).
3. Read more [information about the ban on gatherings](#), which remains in place.

[Press release: 6 year disqualification for Oldham director pumping illicit diesel](#)

Mr Saeed, was a director of SFS (Oldham) Limited which operated the Scouthead petrol station in Oldham, and which went into liquidation on 5 February 2016, owing £61,730 to creditors. Of this, £53,678 was owed to taxpayers as he had not been paying the full level of duty on diesel fuel sold.

The disqualification means Mr Saeed is banned from acting as a company director or from managing, or in any way controlling, a limited company from 14 April until 2023.

An Insolvency Service investigation found that between 26 March 2013 and 13 March 2015, Mr Saeed caused SFS to trade the detriment of HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) by causing SFS to sell diesel which did not bear duty at the full rate and by causing SFS to suppress sales of illicit diesel. HMRC subsequently raised an assessment and penalty totalling a combined £58,344.

Aldona O'Hara, Chief Investigator of Insolvent Investigations Midlands & West at the Insolvency Service, said:

Company directors have a duty to ensure businesses meet their legal obligations, including paying taxes.

Neglect of tax affairs is not a victimless action as it deprives the taxpayer of the funds needed to operate public services.

Notes to editors

Mr Saeed's date of birth is July 1968 and he resides in Oldham.

SFS (Oldham) Limited (CR0 No. 08423011) was incorporated on 27 February 2013 and traded from Scouthead Filling Station, Huddersfield Road, Oldham, OL4 4AS.

Mr Saeed was the sole director from 27 February 2013 to 05 February 2016 (the date of liquidation).

The matter of unfitness, which Mr Saeed did not dispute in the Disqualification Undertaking, was that; Between 26 March 2013 and 13 March 2015 he caused SFS to sell oil which did not bear the full rate and he further caused SFS to suppress sales of illicit diesel resulting in HMRC raising an assessment and a penalty totalling a combined £58,344.

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings.

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#).

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

Press release: End of road for road haulage company director

Longcross went into Liquidation on 27 January 2015 owing at least £200,864 to creditors including £175,423 in respect of unpaid tax.

An investigation by the Insolvency Service found that Mr Davies had failed in his duty as a director to either maintain, preserve or alternatively deliver-up adequate accounting records. As a result, It was not possible to ascertain whether Mr Davies was a creditor of Longcross for £220,000, or alternatively whether he owed Longcross at least £796,479.

However, the Insolvency Service's investigation did conclude that Mr Davies purposefully withheld VAT from HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) in order to keep the company trading between September 2012 and the date of Liquidation. In particular, VAT returns were not submitted to HMRC between March 2013 and October 2014. Longcross did produce a number of VAT returns, but these declared larger liabilities than assessed for the same period by HMRC, and had not been submitted.

The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy accepted an eight year Disqualification Undertaking from Mr Davies, which bars him from acting as a company director or from managing, or in any way controlling, a limited company from 10 April 2017 until 2025.

Aldona O'Hara, Chief Investigator of Insolvent Investigations Midlands & West at the Insolvency Service, said:

Company directors have a duty to ensure businesses meet their legal obligations, including paying taxes and must not benefit themselves at the expense of creditors. Neglect of tax affairs is not a victimless action as it deprives the taxpayer of the funds needed to operate public services.

She added:

Directors have a duty to ensure that their companies maintain proper accounting records, and, following insolvency, deliver them to the office-holder in the interests of fairness and transparency. Without a full account of transactions it is impossible to determine whether a director has discharged his duties properly, or is using a lack of documentation as a cloak for impropriety.

Notes to editors

Gary Thomas Davies' date of birth is July 1968 and he resides in Virginia Water, Surrey.

Longcross Transport Limited (CRO No. 07153034) was incorporated on 10 February 2010 and traded from Trumps Farm, Kitsmead Lane, Longcross, Chertsey, Surrey, KT16 0EF.

Mr Davies was the sole director from 10 February 2010 to 27 January 2015 (the date of liquidation).

The matters of unfitness, which Mr Davies did not dispute in the Disqualification Undertaking, were that;

Between 28 February 2013 and 27 January 2015 he failed to ensure that Longcross maintained and/ or preserved adequate accounting records. Or in the alternative he failed to deliver up to the Liquidator such records as were maintained. Mr Davies further failed to ensure that Longcross complied with its statutory obligations to HMRC with regards to VAT and caused Longcross to trade to the detriment of HMRC from 07 September 2012 to 27 January 2015.

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property
- act as an insolvency practitioner

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings. Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a range of other restrictions.

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is available

Contact Press Office

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[Press release: First World War heroes commemorated as Britain remembers the](#)

Battle of Arras

Throughout April, 17 brave British soldiers will be remembered in special ceremonies, one hundred years to the day they were awarded the Victoria Cross (VC) – the nation's highest military honour.

From Glasgow to Wandsworth in London, communities will come together to pay their own special tributes with a commemorative paving stone laid in honour of their hometown heroes.

British soldiers did not fight alone. They were joined by men from all corners of the Commonwealth who fought alongside their British comrades. A further 8 VCs were awarded to soldiers from Australia and Canada who fought alongside soldiers from Newfoundland, New Zealand, and South Africa.

During the battle which ran from 9 April 1917 to 16 May 1917 in the trenches of Northern France, some 158,000 British, Commonwealth and Allied soldiers lost their lives.

Lord Bourne, Minister for Integration and Faith, said:

As we continue to commemorate the centenary of the First World War, we should remember the exceptional sacrifices made by those from across both the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth. They lost their lives in the fight for liberty.

Each recipient of the Victoria Cross displayed an incredible level of bravery into the face of unimaginable danger. Often they risked their own life to save the lives of their comrades. They remain an inspiration to this day.

I hope that the laying of these commemorative paving stones across the country will ensure these remarkable stories are remembered. I would encourage people in communities across the country to find out more about their local heroes.

Those overseas-born soldiers awarded the Victoria Cross, including at the Battle of Arras, are honoured with a permanent memorial at the [National Memorial Arboretum](#) in Staffordshire, which was unveiled in 2015.

As part of the government's First World War Centenary Programme, the Department for Communities and Local Government launched the campaign to remember and honour all those awarded the Victoria Cross during the First World War with a commemorative paving stone.

The design of the stones was selected from a public competition and includes the name of the soldier and regiment, along with the marking of the Victoria Cross. They are made of Scoutmoor Yorkstone, a hard-wearing British stone that is quarried near Ramsbottom and are sited in locations visible to the

public to inspire viewers to 'pause and remember'.

Further information

Wandsworth paving stones

In Wandsworth, south London, commemorative paving stones will be laid on 22 April 2017 for three locally born recipients of the VC. Two of those, Edward Foster and Reginald Haine, were both awarded for their brave actions during the second phase of the Battle of Arras.

Edward Foster had been employed as a local dustman before the outset of the First World War when he volunteered to join his local regiment, the East Surrey Regiment. Now a Corporal, after a short period of training, he found himself at the front during the Battle of the Somme and again at Arras. During an attack to capture the village of Villiers-Plouich, he engaged two enemy machine guns, even after losing one of his own and succeeding in capturing the enemies' weapons.

Reginald Haine, at the age of 20, vulnerable to opposition fire led an attack on an enemy stronghold in the village of Gavrelle on 28 April 1917. Along with a comrade from the 1st Battalion, Honourable Artillery Company, using bombs launched by hand, they repelled a trench full of the enemy, captured the town for the British forces, disabled two machine gun posts and captured 50 prisoners. Despite the risk of their position being completely surrounded by the enemy, Haine held his position for the night.

Lieutenant Colonel Reginald Haine went on to receive the Military Cross for action in India in 1919, served in the Home Guard in WW2 and returned to civilian life as an accountant after his military career.

The third being honoured in Wandsworth is Captain Arthur Lascelles VC. He was born locally in Streatham and served with the Durham Light Infantry. He was awarded the VC for bravery in December 1917 at Masnieres in northern France.

British-Canadian VC awards

Two soldiers due to be remembered in Britain this April – William Milne and John Pattison – although born in Britain, emigrated to Canada, enlisted and then fought with the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Both took part in the Battle of Vimy Ridge, itself a part of the larger Arras offensive.

Private William Milne aged just 24, crawled across the sleet-covered ground on the front line close to the enemy to throw hand grenades at two enemy machine gun posts ensuring a safer advance. His actions saved lives of many of his colleagues but sadly William Milne died in action shortly afterwards.

Lieutenant Colonel Simon Rushen, chief of staff of the Canadian Defence Liaison Staff will attend the memorial for William Milne in Cambusnethan Old & Morningside Parish Church, in North Lanarkshire, on Friday 7 April 2017.

Private John Pattison also displayed extreme bravery on the battlefield. He

crawled across no-man's land, using craters for shelter from heavy machine-gun fire to approach enemy machine gun posts. From a covered position, he threw grenades at close quarters disarming the enemy and saving the lives of his comrades. Although aware he was recommended for the VC, he died two months later in battle so did not receive his VC in person.

John Pattison will be honoured with a memorial service in General Gordon Square in Woolwich, South London on 10 April 2017.

Two Canadian-born soldiers were also awarded the VC for their bravery in the battle. Lieutenant Colonel Thain Macdowell, single-handedly captured 77 enemy soldiers after finding them hidden in an underground fortress. Lance-Sergeant Ellis Sifton eliminated a particularly deadly machine gun post in hand to hand combat, but died in the struggle.

Ceremonies taking place throughout April for VCs awarded at Arras include:

Name	Ceremony
Major William Gosling VC	2 April 2017, 10.30am, Parish Church of St John the Baptist & St Helen, Wroughton, Wiltshire
Private William Milne VC	7 April 2017, 11am, Cambusnethan Old & Morningside Parish Church, North Lanarkshire
Lance Corporal Thomas Bryan VC	9 April 2017, 2pm, War memorial in Mary Stevens Park, Stourbridge, Worcestershire
Captain Harry Cator VC	9 April 2017, 3pm, St Margaret's Church, Drayton, Norfolk
Private John Pattison VC	10 April 2017, 11am, General Gordon Square, Woolwich, London
Company Sergeant-Major Edward Brooks VC	10 April 2017, 10am, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire
Lieutenant Donald MacKintosh VC	11 April 2017, 11.30am, Glasgow Academy, The Saunders Centre, Glasgow
Lance-Corporal Harold Mugford VC	11 April 2017, 11.30am, Bermondsey and Rotherhithe War Memorial, London
Lieutenant Charles Pope VC	21 April 2017, 12.30pm, Sidney Square, Whitechapel, London
Corporal Edward Foster VC	22 April 2017, 11am, Wandsworth Town Hall, Wandsworth, London
Lieutenant Colonel Reginald Haine VC	22 April 2017, 11am, Wandsworth Town Hall, Wandsworth, London
Captain Arthur Henderson VC	24 April 2017, 11am, Renfrewshire House, Paisely, Renfrewshire
Captain David Hirsch VC	27 April 2017, 11.30am, St Chad's Church, Headingley, West Yorkshire
Private Horace Waller VC	29 April 2017, 11am, Dewsbury Town Hall, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire
Sergeant John Ormsby VC	29 April 2017, 11am, Dewsbury Town Hall, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire

Name	Ceremony
Captain Alfred Pollard VC	29 April 2017, Wallington Library Gardens, Sutton, London
Sergeant James Welch VC	29 April 2017, 10.15am, New Street, Stratfield Saye, Hampshire

Ceremonies taking place in April for VC recipients from other campaigns

Name	Ceremony
Private Charles Melvin VC (Battle of Istabulat)	21 April 2017, 11am, Kirriemuir Town Square, Kirriemuir, Angus
Captain Arthur Lascelles VC (Battle of Cambrai)	22 April 2017, 11am, Wandsworth Town Hall, Wandsworth, London

Background information

A total of 25 Victoria Crosses were awarded to soldiers from Britain, Australia and Canada for their gallant actions at Arras.

There were 627 individuals who received the VC during the First World War, although in total 628 VCs were awarded. This is because one individual, Noel Chavasse, was awarded the VC twice during the First World War. Of these individuals, 361 were born in England, 70 were born in Scotland and 16 were born in Wales. Thirty-five were born in pre-partition Ireland and 145 were born in other countries overseas. The first stones were laid on the 23 August 2014, 100 years from the first actions during the Battle of Mons.

The design of the stones was selected from a public competition won by Charlie MacKeith from London. The selected design uses a circular shape, created to inspire viewers to 'pause and remember'. The stones also use the material, form and lettering of the family memorials used by the War Graves Commission.

You can follow the laying of the commemorative stones on Twitter, [#VCPavingStones](#).

[News story: SME wins first campaign through Campaign Solutions framework](#)

An SME has become the first agency to secure a major campaign through the Campaign Solutions framework.

23red has developed the Department of Communities and Local Government's mayoral elections campaign.

Voters go to the polls on 4 May to elect combined authority mayors for six of England's regions: Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, the West Midlands, the Tees Valley, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and the West of England.

To support this, 23red were tasked with developing the creative for a digital, social, radio and out-of-home campaign tailored to each area to raise awareness and increase engagement in the elections.

How the framework works

Campaign Solutions is an innovative marketing and communications framework covering the services public bodies need for end-to-end campaigns.

It aims to shift public bodies from traditionally prescriptive campaign buying to a solutions-focussed approach, encouraging innovative approaches to campaigns.

The framework is complemented by [Communication Services](#), designed for tactical requirements, helping public bodies tap into the very best expertise and talent in the communications industry.

23red was one of 27 agencies who successfully secured places on the Campaign Solutions framework, with over half of them SMEs. The company also secured a place on Communication Services.

Government aims to spend £1 out of every £3 through SMEs by 2020.

Find out more

To find out more about Campaign Solutions, [visit the CCS pipeline pages](#)