

Forest of Dean visitors and residents urged to stop potential spread of African Swine Fever

People visiting or living in the Forest of Dean are being reminded not to feed the wild boar or drop food to help prevent an outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF).

Over 2.5 million people visit the Forest of Dean and with the large number of staycations this summer due to the pandemic, there is a concern that some visitors may not properly dispose of food waste. This increases the risk of wild boar eating food scraps, which in turn increases the risk of African swine fever being introduced to the UK, which would be devastating for the UK pork industry.

African swine fever poses no risk to human health but is a highly contagious disease for pigs and wild boar with no vaccine available. In recent years it has been circulating in parts of Africa, Eastern and Central Europe and Asia, leading to the deaths of millions of pigs and causing significant disruption to the meat trade. In 2020 the disease spread to Germany through the movement of wild boar and this year it has been found in their farmed pigs for the first time.

The virus can survive for weeks and even months in pork meat and pork products, including cooked, cured, and frozen meat. The most likely way the virus could be introduced to the UK is by a member of the public bringing pork or pork products back from an affected country.

UK Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer Richard Irvine said:

If African Swine Fever arrived in the Forest of Dean it would have a devastating impact on our pigs and pig keepers. We regularly test our contingency plans to ensure that we are ready to respond to potential future disease outbreaks.

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Forest of Dean District Council, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Communities Paul Hiatt said:

We are grateful to live in a beautiful and culturally rich part of England. It is important that we preserve our environment and proactively prevent any challenges to our individual and collective

enjoyment of these natural resources.

Join us and play your part to help prevent the spread of African Swine Fever to the wildlife in our beloved forests. Secure waste bins are provided, please put your food waste in them. Together we can help to maintain a healthy forest and wildlife.

Everyone can help to stop the spread of ASF to the UK by doing the following:

- If you are visiting ASF-affected areas in Europe, Asia, or Africa you must not bring any pork or pork products back to the UK.
- Disposing of leftovers or food waste in secure bins that pigs or wildlife cannot access.
- Farmers, the public and members of the food industry should practise high biosecurity standards, including never feeding catering waste, kitchen scraps or meat products to pigs which is illegal and can spread the disease.

The Government continually monitors disease outbreaks around the world to assess whether there may be risks for the UK and takes action to limit the risk of the disease reaching our shores.

Further information on [ASF, including for people travelling abroad, can be found here](#). [Visit Forestry England's website for information about wild boar](#).

Government departments across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland recently tested African swine fever contingency plans during [Exercise Holly](#).

Chief Medical Officers to consider vaccinating people aged 12 to 15 following JCVI advice

The four Chief Medical Officers will provide further advice on the COVID-19 vaccination of young people aged 12 to 15 with COVID-19 vaccines following the advice of the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

The independent medicines regulator, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), has approved the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines for people aged 12 and over after they met strict standards of safety and effectiveness.

The JCVI has advised that the health benefits from vaccination are marginally greater than the potential known harms. It has advised the government to seek

further input from the Chief Medical Officers on the wider impacts.

This includes the impact on schools and young people's education, which has been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

UK health ministers from across the four nations have today written to the Chief Medical Officers to request they begin the process of assessing the broader impact of universal COVID-19 vaccination in this age group.

They will now convene experts and senior leaders in clinical and public health to consider the issue. They will then present their advice to ministers on whether a universal programme should be taken forward.

People aged 12 to 15 who are clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 or who live with adults who are at increased risk of serious illness from the virus are already eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine and are being contacted by the NHS, to be invited to come forward. The JCVI has advised that this offer should be expanded to include more children aged 12 to 15, for example those with sickle cell disease or type 1 diabetes.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Our COVID-19 vaccines have brought a wide range of benefits to the country, from saving lives and preventing hospitalisations, to helping stop infections and allowing children to return to school.

I am grateful for the expert advice that I have received from the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

People aged 12 to 15 who are clinically vulnerable to the virus have already been offered a COVID-19 vaccine, and today we'll be expanding the offer to those with conditions such as sickle cell disease or type 1 diabetes to protect even more vulnerable children.

Along with Health Ministers across the four nations, I have today written to the Chief Medical Officers to ask that they consider the vaccination of 12 to 15 year olds from a broader perspective, as suggested by the JCVI.

We will then consider the advice from the Chief Medical Officers, building on the advice from the JCVI, before making a decision shortly.

Scottish Health Minister Humza Yousaf said:

I want to thank the JCVI for today's advice regarding vaccination for 12 -15 year olds.

While the JCVI has agreed that the benefits marginally outweigh the

risks they are not yet prepared to recommend universal vaccination of 12-15 year olds, however, they have suggested that Health Ministers may wish to ask their respective CMOs to explore the issue further, taking into consideration broader educational and societal impacts. Therefore, I have agreed with the other three UK Health Ministers to write a letter asking the four Chief Medical Officers to consider this latest guidance and explore whether there is additional evidence to suggest it would be beneficial to offer vaccination to all 12 – 15 year olds. We have asked for this further work to be conducted as soon as possible.

A further update will be issued once these discussions have taken place.

In the meantime, we will offer the vaccine to those children and young people currently recommended.

The recent increase in cases of COVID-19 means it remains crucial that everyone who is offered a vaccination takes up the offer.

Northern Ireland Health Minister Robin Swann:

I welcome the extension of the vaccination programme to include a wider group of children aged 12-15 years of age with underlying medical conditions. The importance of vaccination is evident and I would urge those who are eligible to get vaccinated as soon as possible to help protect themselves and those around them.

I am also grateful for the JCVI advice on 12-15 year olds and agree that this issue warrants further consideration. It is entirely appropriate that our most senior medical advisers take forward this piece of work urgently. I look forward to seeing their considerations in the near future.

Welsh Government Health Minister Eluned Morgan said:

I would like to thank the JCVI for fully considering the issue of vaccinating 12-15 year olds and for taking the care to form a balanced view. Our intention as it has been from the start of the pandemic is to follow the science and evidence, and I have asked my Chief Medical Officer to provide guidance at the earliest opportunity on the clinical and wider health benefits of vaccinating this age group.

The Health and Social Care Secretary, Sajid Javid, has asked the NHS to put preparations in place to roll out vaccinations to 12 to 15 year olds, should it be recommended by the Chief Medical Officers.

If this group is offered the vaccine, parental or carer consent will be sought, just as with other school immunisation programmes.

The vaccination programme has so far provided protection to over 48 million people over the age of 16 across the UK – including over 48 million first doses and over 43 million second doses.

The latest data from Public Health England and Cambridge University shows vaccines have saved more than 105,000 lives and prevented 143,600 hospitalisations and 24 million cases in England.

Who are the MDP?

[Watch the video: What do the MDP do?](#)

We invited BFBS to film the work of our specialist officers and teams, as part of our 50th anniversary campaign, to share insight with the defence community, and more widely the general public, on who we are, what we do and life in the MDP.

A series of mini-documentaries and reports will now feature on BFBS channels during the run up to the Force's half-century milestone on 1 October 2021.

British Forces Broadcasting Service filming Ministry of Defence Police firearms training scenario.

The first of those features, 'Who are the MDP', released by BFBS on 2 September, focuses on firearms training scenarios. Officers speak on how life as an MDP officer is a different and unique policing role and, although the armed policing aspect brings with it some similarities for ex-service personnel, there are also distinct differences.

Force Firearms Officer, Superintendent Trevor Clark, says:

I don't think it is widely understood what the Force actually does and what capabilities it has.

The film also highlights how critical the work of our officers is, to protecting the nation's defences and national infrastructure.

As Firearms Instructor PC Jonathan McElhinney explains:

We're looking after infrastructure that if in the wrong hands of

the wrong people could be detrimental to the world.

Coming soon...

BFBS joins the dog team, marine unit and Project Servator officers at HM Naval Base Devonport.

Interested in a career with the MDP?

Our recruitment campaign re-opens for candidate registration and pre-screening on 20 September. Visit mod.police.uk to find out more.

Follow #ForceWithADifference and #MDP50 on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Further information

[50 years delivering unique specialist policing #MDP50 Campaign Launch](#)

[Reflections on 50 years of the MDP](#)

[A brief history of the Ministry of Defence Police July 2021 Medium](#)

[Talk Through: the magazine of the Ministry of Defence Police](#)

[New local COVID testing site opens in Bangor](#)

Press release

This is the latest site to be opened in Wales by the UK Government



A new walk-through coronavirus testing facility has opened for those with symptoms to book appointments at Beach Street Car Park West (LL57 1AT) in Bangor, as part of the UK Government's UK-wide drive to continue to improve

the accessibility of coronavirus testing for local communities. The UK testing programme is delivered on a four nations basis, with the UK Government working with Welsh Government to increase access to testing.

Testing at this site is only available for those with coronavirus symptoms – a high temperature, a new continuous cough, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste. Anyone with one or more of these symptoms can get a test at the site, or by booking a test at nhs.uk/coronavirus or calling 119. The UK Government is committed to making it even easier for everyone to get tested and reduce the time it takes to receive test results.

Testing at the new site started on Saturday, 28 August, with appointments made available each day.

Secretary of State for Wales, Simon Hart, said:

The opening of this new test centre in Bangor helps local people access these facilities without travelling long distances. It's vital that people get tested if they have symptoms and the UK Government is committed to making that as easy as possible.

There are UK Government testing facilities all across Wales, and the hard work they are doing, along with the NHS and their partners, is playing a hugely important role in our fight against the virus.

The Covid-19 pandemic is not over and we are asking everyone to remain cautious and self-isolate if told so by NHS Wales Test Trace Protect. I urge anyone who is living in the Bangor area to use this new facility and get tested if they have any symptoms”.

The new Bangor site is part of the largest network of diagnostic testing facilities created in British history, which has been massively expanded with the introduction of free, twice-weekly rapid tests for everyone in Wales. Rapid testing detects cases quickly, meaning positive cases can isolate immediately.

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[**UK's Minister for Africa announces £250,000 to support Ghana**](#)

Ghana's long-term prosperity is central to the UK-Ghana partnership and security and stability is essential to the country's growth. Together, the UK

and Ghana are partnering to tackle shared threats through a new Ministerial security dialogue, law enforcement partnerships and peer-to-peer training.

To strengthen the UK-Ghana security partnership, Minister Duddridge will use his visit to announce a further £250,000 to fund 4 vital security and stability projects that will bolster Ghana's capability to combat threats. This funding is in addition to the existing £1 million of UK funding to support the country's counter-terrorism capability.

Arriving in Ghana, UK Minister for Africa James Duddridge MP, said:

Ghana's stability is essential for growth and prosperity in both Ghana and across West Africa. Through our flagship Conflict, Stability and Security Fund we are launching 4 new projects in Ghana worth £250,000, to support the ongoing safety and stability on the northern border.

The UK is clear that it is in our shared interest to support a strong, and peaceful Ghana, both now and in the years ahead, and our new package of support will empower communities, the country's security agencies and civil society organisations to continue to uphold stability along the border, across the country and within the region.

These new 4 security and stability projects will:

- grow the capacity of Ghana's national crisis response model
- provide specialists to help deliver Ghana's nationwide security exercise
- fund the important work of on-the-ground civil society organisations through STAR Ghana Foundation, working directly with communities across the country that are most vulnerable to insecurity

During his visit, Minister Duddridge will meet with key partners and stakeholders including honourable Ministers, leaders in Ghana's art and tourism sectors, as well as representatives from business and industry. The Minister will also visit Accra's iconic Christiansburg castle, tour Gallery 1957 and meet British-Ghanaian diaspora driving business and innovation in Ghana.

Minister Duddridge last visited Ghana in January 2021, where he attended His Excellency President Nana Akufo-Addo's Presidential Inauguration, met virtually with His Excellency Vice-President Mahamudu Bawumia during the recent UK-Ghana Business Council held in June this year and finally met His Excellency President Akufo-Addo with other senior officials and honourable Ministers during the recent Global Education Summit held in London in July.

Further information

- photos of the Minister's visit will be posted on the [British High Commission's Flickr page](#)
- the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) was launched in 2015

- and has transformed the way the UK responds to conflict and fragility overseas. It enables 12 government departments and agencies to address security priorities in a collaborative way
- the £250,000 will fund 4 projects:
 - £100,000 for STAR Ghana Foundation –
 - working with government bodies to support the implementation of the Sustainable Peace, Security and Development in Northern Ghana
 - bring together central and regional governments, traditional and religious leaders and civil society at the upcoming a Northern Development Summit
 - identify and work with key stakeholders and civil society organisations in northern Ghana to test new ways of addressing the root causes of conflict and insecurity. This will be on the ground-community based work
 - £30,000 to develop Standard Operating Procedures for policing to deliver emergency response capability and interoperability between police counter-terrorism unit and other units within the service
 - £50,000 to provide UK specialist support to help deliver Ghana's nationwide security exercise
 - £70,000 to strengthen Ghana's national crisis response model within the Ministry of National Security
 - established in 2018, the UK-Ghana Business Council (UKGBC) functions as a high-level forum to promote bilateral relations and strategic partnerships between Ghanaian private sector and UK counterparts. Promoting trade and investment for the mutual benefit of each nation and enhancing economic growth
 - on Wednesday, 18 August 2021, the shipment of 249,000 UK-donated AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines arrived in Accra. These vital vaccines have been deployed across Ghana, reaching those most in need