

Avian influenza (bird flu) identified at Kent farm

Avian influenza of the H5N2 strain has been confirmed in at a small commercial premises near Deal in Kent today (2 November).

All 480 birds on site will be humanely culled to limit the spread of the disease. A 1km Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI) Restricted Zone has also been put in place around the infected farm to limit the risk of the disease spreading.

The advice from Public Health England (PHE) is that the risk to public health from the virus is very low and the Food Standards Agency has made clear that bird flu does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers. Thoroughly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs, are safe to eat.

Chief Veterinary Officer Christine Middlemiss said:

Avian flu has been confirmed at a small commercial premises in Kent. Immediate steps have been taken to limit the risk of the disease spreading and all remaining poultry and captive birds at the farm will be culled.

Public Health England has confirmed that the risk to public health is very low and the Food Standards Agency has said that bird flu does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers. There will be no impact on food supply as this business does not supply poultry meat or eggs to the commercial food chain.

Bird keepers should remain alert for any signs of disease, report suspected disease immediately and ensure they are maintaining good biosecurity on their premises.

We are urgently looking for any evidence of disease spread associated with this farm to control and eliminate it.

Dr Gavin Dabrera, Consultant in Acute Respiratory Infections at PHE, said:

Avian influenza remains an uncommon infection in humans and the risk to the UK population remains very low – we will continue working with Defra and the local Health Protection Team to monitor the situation closely.

Do not touch any sick or dead birds and make sure to wash your hands thoroughly with soap after contact with any animal.

A Food Standards Agency spokesperson said:

The Food Standard Agency advises that, on the basis of the current scientific evidence, this strain of avian influenza does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers.

The wider risk posed by avian influenzas through the food chain is very low.

Properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs, remain safe to eat.

A detailed investigation is in progress to determine the most likely source of this outbreak.

Wild birds migrating from mainland Europe during the winter period can spread the disease to poultry and other captive birds. There are some simple measures that all poultry keepers, whether they are running a large commercial farm, keeping a few hens in their back garden, or rearing game birds, should take to protect their birds against the threat of avian flu.

These include:

- Keeping the area where birds live clean and tidy, controlling rats and mice and regularly cleansing and disinfecting any hard surfaces
- Cleaning footwear before and after visits
- Placing birds' feed and water in fully enclosed areas that are protected from wild birds, and removing any spilled feed regularly
- Putting fencing around outdoor areas where birds are allowed and limiting their access to ponds or areas visited by wild waterfowl
- Where possible, avoid keeping ducks and geese with other poultry species.

The UK has remained free of highly pathogenic avian influenza since September 2017. A low pathogenic H5N3 strain of the disease, which poses no threat to human health, returned in December 2019 and was quickly dealt with by Government action. The UK declared itself free from avian influenza H5N3 in June.

Further information on how to help prevent the spread of the disease can be found [here](#).

[Statement by the Media Freedom](#)

Coalition on International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists

The International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists was established on 2 November in 2013, drawing vital attention to the necessary protection of unrepressed journalism as a key element of freedom of opinion and expression, both online and offline.

The global death rates from, and low conviction rates for, violent crimes against journalists and media workers clearly demonstrate the current obstacles to achieving a free media globally. On this day, we pay tribute to those journalists who have been threatened, subjected to violence or killed in their line of work, including female journalists, who remain disproportionately targeted.

In nine out of ten cases, the perpetrators of violence against journalists go unpunished. UNESCO reports that 99 journalists and media workers were killed in 2018 and another 57 journalists and media workers were killed in 2019. This climate of impunity perpetuates the cycle of violence against journalists and the media. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing threats to journalists across the globe. Many have been reporting from the front lines of this health crisis, where too many have faced censorship, intimidation or violence.

Violence against journalists and media workers comes in many forms. From harassment and intimidation to abduction, sexual and gender-based violence and from illegal arrest to murder. This professional body also faces deliberate attempts to impact its ability to work, to investigate and to report, from overly restrictive laws to censorship. Apart from killings, female journalists are also affected by gender-specific safety risks, such as sexual harassment, sexual violence and threats of violence. Yet the ability of journalists to work freely is fundamental to a functioning democracy. It allows access to reliable information and counters disinformation, misinformation and other forms of manipulation of information.

We call upon all states to advocate for a free, independent, plural and diverse media; to condemn actions that might jeopardize the safety and independence of journalists and media workers; and to hold to account those who seek to harm journalists or restrict their ability to work.

Nations from around the world will come together to address this issue at the first ministerial meeting of the Media Freedom Coalition on 16 November 2020, as part of the second Global Conference for Media Freedom.

Together, we stand committed to universal human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Government confirms rapid review into Nottingham City Council

- Max Caller CBE appointed to take forward rapid review of Nottingham City Council
- Review will investigate the council's governance and risk management
- Recommendations will be made to the Local Government Secretary later this month

A rapid non-statutory review will be conducted into Nottingham City Council, the Local Government Secretary Robert Jenrick has confirmed today (2 November 2020).

The review will look into the serious governance and risk management issues associated with the council's private energy company Robin Hood Energy.

The council has agreed to this short, informal review to identify the issues it is facing and make recommendations for action that should be taken. The decision to carry out the review was taken following a number of issues raised in a Public Interest Report published in August by Grant Thornton.

The report highlighted the serious failure of the governance at the council since Robin Hood Energy was set up in 2015, including lack of effective risk management, plus failure to take on advice or pass on accurate and timely information.

The rapid review does not rule out a more formal, statutory intervention from the government in the future – a decision on which will be informed by this work.

Local Government Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

I have been monitoring the very serious situation at Nottingham City Council closely, including the collapse of their Robin Hood Energy scheme.

A review such as this is not undertaken lightly – councils have a duty to manage taxpayers' money responsibly and should be held to account where they are found to have failed to do so.

It is important we work together to turn the council around at this challenging time as they continue to support their community through the pandemic.

Nottingham Council has been allocated over £34.3 million in unringfenced

funding since the start of the pandemic. In addition, the council's core spending power saw an increase of nearly £17.6 million this financial year even before additional emergency funding was announced.

Three independent reviewers have been appointed to carry out the review. Max Caller CBE will lead and will be supported by a financial reviewer, Julie Parker, as well as a commercial reviewer, Phil Brookes.

Lead reviewer, Max Caller CBE previously led the best value inspection into Northamptonshire County Council and was also the government commissioner in London Borough Tower Hamlets charged with improving the council's governance and culture. He has served as Chief Executive of London Boroughs of Barnet and Hackney Councils.

Financial reviewer Julie Parker is a former Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) at both Barking & Dagenham Council and Haringey Council and supported Max Caller CBE on the financial aspects of the best value inspection in Northamptonshire County Council.

Commercial reviewer, Phil Brookes is a Crown Representative at the Cabinet Office and has worked with a range of strategic suppliers to government in facilities and construction services. Phil previously worked in a number of roles across infrastructure investment, most recently for Balfour Beatty.

The findings of the review will be reported to the Local Government Secretary and published on GOV.UK once complete.

Office address and general enquiries

[Update on the Parole Board working during Covid-19](#)

Press release

The Parole Board has released the following statement in light of the Government's announcement of a second lockdown.



Following the latest announcement from the Prime Minister we are now aware of new measures across the country as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic.

The Parole Board is committed to progressing cases wherever possible and will continue to work as it has done since March 23rd, with remote hearings taking place.

We will be working with prisons to try and enable Covid safe face to face hearings where possible for cases which cannot be conducted remotely.

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[Nottingham City Council: lead reviewer appointment letter](#)

Letter from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government appointing Max Caller CBE as the lead reviewer for the non-statutory review into Nottingham City Council. This letter includes the terms of reference for the review.

The findings of this review will be reported to the Local Government Secretary in November and published on GOV.UK once complete.