

# Updated rules for farm workers arriving in England

The temporary measures published today will mean seasonal poultry workers arriving from abroad will be able to work during their 14-day quarantine period from 4am on 17 November. However, they will still be required to self-isolate from the general public. To avoid spreading the virus, they will be required to form 'cohorts' meaning they only live and work with a select group of the same workers during their stay and they do not mix with other employees.

The decision, agreed by the Department for Transport, the Department for Health and Social Care and Public Health England, will ensure poultry farmers and food producers, in particular turkey farmers, have access to the necessary workforce to mitigate any potential risks to Christmas food supply.

Each year around 5,500 seasonal workers arrive on English farms to help during the busy festive period. This includes slaughtering turkeys, a job that demands high-skilled professional labour to ensure our animal welfare standards are maintained.

Nevertheless the UK has a highly resilient food supply chain which held up well in the spring, and will do so again over the festive period. The Government continues to work closely with food retailers and the food industry to ensure it is prepared to deal with a range of scenarios.

Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, said:

Christmas dinner is the highlight of the year for many families and this year it will be particularly significant.

Businesses up and down the country have faced unprecedented challenges from Coronavirus and these measures will ensure UK farmers and food producers are supported and able to keep up with the Christmas demand over the festive period.

Environment Secretary, George Eustice, said:

It's essential that farmers and food producers get the support that they need at this busy time of year, so it is good news that seasonal workers will be able to get straight to work once they arrive in the country.

The run-up to Christmas is particularly important for farmers and food producers who need more workers on their farms to meet the festive demand.

Seasonal workers will be required to comply with a number of rigorous measures including:

- Self-isolating away from the general public for the first 14 days – workers will stay in their work/accommodation bubbles with food and other required goods delivered to them by their employer
- Cohorting – workers will be placed in groups with whom they will live and work, without mixing with other workers, throughout their stay, to contain any potential positive contacts
- Covid-secure guidance – workers and employers will be provided with clear and translated guidance jointly developed by Defra and PHE
- Time limit – all seasonal poultry workers are required to leave England by 31 December 2020, at which point the exemption will no longer be in force

National restrictions introduced on 5 November 2020 remain in place meaning everyone must stay at home unless travelling for a very limited set of reasons, including for work or education. This means people can no longer travel to take holidays or travel internationally – unless for work or other legally permitted reasons. Those in breach of the rules face penalties starting at £200 and rising to a maximum of £6,400.