

Please see announcement below from the Welsh Government:

Cabinet Secretary announces a new Avian Influenza Prevention Zone

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs has announced a new Avian Influenza Prevention Zone, in place from 28 February until 30 April.

Lesley Griffiths has also confirmed there will be some important changes to the measures that will apply within the new all-Wales Prevention Zone. The current Prevention Zone requires all keepers of poultry and other captive birds to keep their birds indoors or take all appropriate steps to keep them separate from wild birds, and to enhance biosecurity. This follows a number of confirmed cases of Avian Flu across the UK, including in a backyard flock of chicken and ducks near Pontyberem, Carmarthenshire.

Expert advice suggests it is unlikely the current level of risk will change before the current Prevention Zone is scheduled to end on 28 February. In view of this, and following consultation with industry and veterinary representatives, the Cabinet Secretary has decided to put in place a new Prevention Zone, that will take effect from midnight on 28 February.

The new Avian Influenza Prevention Zone requires all keepers to complete a self assessment of biosecurity measures on their premises. The objective being to keep domestic flocks totally separate from wild birds by continuing to keep birds housed or using other measures, which may include permitting controlled access to outside areas, subject to the introduction of additional risk mitigation measures.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“My decision to put in place a new Avian Influenza Prevention Zone until 30 April is based on sound expert and industry advice.

“The risk of infection from wild birds is unlikely to decrease in the coming weeks. The changes I am announcing today are proportionate and place the onus on the keeper to select the best option for their circumstances to protect their birds. They must, however, ensure compliance with the additional risk mitigation measures”.

The Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales, Christianne Glossop added:

“Keepers of poultry and other captive birds must remain vigilant for signs of disease. Avian Influenza is a notifiable disease, and any suspicion should be reported immediately to the Animal and Plant Health Agency. Keepers should practice the highest levels of biosecurity if they are to minimise the risk of infection.

“I continue to strongly encourage all poultry keepers, even those with fewer than 50 birds, to provide their details to the Poultry Register. This will ensure they can be contacted immediately, via email or text update, in an avian disease outbreak enabling them to protect their flock at the earliest opportunity”.

Information on the requirements of the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone, guidance and latest developments are all available on the Welsh Government [website](#).

Notes for editors

Proposed changes to apply after 28 February:

All keepers of poultry and other captive birds must complete an assessment of their premises and then ensure they adopt one or more of the following:

- house their birds
- keep totally separate from wild birds by use of netting etc.
- allow controlled access to outside areas subject to applying additional risk mitigation measures

This places the onus on the keeper to select the best option most applicable to their circumstances to protect their birds. It also permits poultry keepers to continue to house their birds should they wish to do so voluntarily or if they wish to allow their birds back outside (to protect their free range status) they must ensure that the additional risk mitigation measures are complied with.

In addition to whichever option chosen all keepers of poultry and other captive birds must also ensure that:

- wild birds cannot access feed and water intended for poultry and other captive birds.
- any person who comes into contact with poultry and other captive birds must take all reasonable precautions to avoid the transfer of contamination between premises, including cleansing and disinfection of equipment, vehicles and footwear;
- steps are taken to reduce the movement of people, vehicles or equipment to and from areas where poultry or captive birds are kept to minimise contamination between premises;
- vermin control programmes are implemented, including making the area and buildings where poultry or captive birds are kept inaccessible and unattractive to wild birds;
- housing and equipment is thoroughly cleansed and disinfected at the end of a production cycle;
- the area / range and buildings where poultry or captive birds are kept is regularly checked for signs of wild bird access, kept clean;
- disinfectant, at the right concentration, is kept at all points where people should use it, such as farm entrances and before entering poultry housing or enclosures;
- domestic waterfowl (ducks and geese) are kept separately to, and cannot make contact with, other domestic species;
- Ensure that the site is regularly inspected and kept clean, any spillages are immediately cleaned