

The Government Chief Vet as of 6<sup>th</sup> December has [declared a Prevention Zone](#) introducing enhanced biosecurity requirements for poultry and captive birds, helping protect them from a strain of avian flu circulating in mainland Europe. The zone covers England and will remain in place for 30 days.

Keepers of poultry and other captive birds are now required to keep their birds indoors, or take appropriate steps to keep them separate from wild birds. Outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (H5N8) have been confirmed in poultry and wild birds in several countries across Europe. No cases of H5N8 have been found in the UK and this order is a precautionary measure to help prevent potential infection from wild birds. Public Health England (PHE) advises that the threat to human health remains very low. Defra is continuing to monitor the situation closely and has increased its surveillance activity, while keepers are being urged to reinforce biosecurity measures on their premises.

Chief Veterinary Officer Nigel Gibbens said:

While no cases of H5N8 avian flu have been found in the UK, and PHE advises the public health threat is low, we are closely monitoring the situation across Europe and have scaled up surveillance in response to the heightened risk. As a precaution, and to allow time for poultry and captive bird keepers to put in place appropriate biosecurity measures, we have declared a 30-day Prevention Zone to reduce the risk of infection from wild birds.”

Poultry keepers are advised to be vigilant for any signs of disease in their birds and any wild birds, and seek prompt advice from their vet if they have any concerns. They can help prevent avian flu by maintaining good biosecurity on their premises, including:

- cleansing and disinfecting clothing, footwear, equipment and vehicles before and after contact with poultry – if practical, use disposable protective clothing;
- reducing the movement of people, vehicles or equipment to and from areas where poultry are kept to minimise contamination from manure, slurry and other products and using effective vermin control;
- thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting housing at the end of a production cycle;
- keeping fresh disinfectant at the right concentration at all points where people should use it, such as farm entrances and before entering poultry housing or enclosures; and
- minimising direct and indirect contact between poultry and wild birds, including making sure all feed and water is not accessible to wild birds.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-measures-to-protect-poultry-against-avian-flu>