



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

T: 03459 335577
helpline@defra.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/defra



ROCHFORD PARISH COUNCIL
Parish Rooms Rear of
82 West Street
Rochford
SS4 1AS



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Dear Resident,

I am contacting you as the UK Chief Vet because there has been an outbreak of Avian Influenza (also known as bird flu) in your area. As you are **located in, or very close to the Surveillance Zone, IF you keep poultry such as chickens, ducks or geese, game birds, pigeons or other birds even if you only keep them as pets, we need you to take action.**

The avian influenza strain in this outbreak presents a **very low risk to human health** but is highly pathogenic for birds, meaning they can catch and spread the disease easily. More information can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu#latest-situation>

If you keep poultry or captive birds, regardless of the number of birds you keep, you need to take action. The rest of this letter explains what you need to do.

If you do not keep poultry or captive birds, then you do not need to read beyond here, however, you can still help us by reporting dead wild birds. If you find any dead wild waterfowl (swans, geese or ducks) or other dead wild birds such as gulls or birds of prey, you should report them to the Defra helpline on 03459 335577. More information is available on our website at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu#wild-birds-in-england>.

The Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA) which is the government agency responsible for animal health, is working tirelessly to tackle confirmed cases of bird flu. Whilst we are doing everything we can, animal disease control is everybody's responsibility and we need your support. Most people are already helping by following the guidance above. I hope you will also play your part by following the steps outlined in this letter.

Yours faithfully,

CHRISTINE MIDDLEMISS
UK CHIEF VETERINARY OFFICER
Christine.Middlemiss@defra.gov.uk



What you need to do if you keep poultry or other captive birds?

1 Register your birds

It is quick, free and easy to register your birds. The quickest way to do so is using the enclosed form and sending it by email to surveillance@apha.gov.uk. However, you can also register over the phone by calling 03300 416589 (Lines open 08:30 – 17:00 Monday – Friday).

If you have more than 50 birds, you **MUST** register them by law. If you have fewer than 50, we strongly advise that you register them also. This will enable us to monitor avian influenza infection in the area – we may need to test a sample of birds in your area to show that the disease has not spread and is under control. It will also enable us to provide you with up-to-date information and advice on keeping your birds safe.

If you keep poultry, and are not yet registered, please do so by 17/01/2022

2 Report any illness or deaths in your birds

As always, please seek advice from your vet if your birds become ill for any reason. Avian influenza is a notifiable disease. If you or your vet suspect the disease, you are required by law to report it, so that the suspicion can be investigated.

Reporting suspected disease is especially important now that your area has already experienced an avian influenza outbreak.

Contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) immediately on **03000 200301** if you suspect avian influenza.

3 Make sure your birds are safe from infection.

An Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) with mandatory housing measures came into force across the UK on the 29 November 2021. These measures mean that it is a legal requirement for all bird keepers across the UK (whether they have pet birds, commercial flocks or just a few birds in a backyard flock) to keep their birds indoors and follow strict biosecurity measures to limit the spread of and eradicate the disease.

Currently, you **must** either house your birds or keep them in fully netted outdoor area, which is capable of preventing ingress of wild birds and inspected regularly to ensure it is not contaminated with the faecal material or feathers from them. Feed and bedding must be kept indoors. Clothing and everything else that your birds come into contact with must be clean and free from any possibility of contamination with the avian influenza virus.

More information on biosecurity for avian influenza and detailed measures in place are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu#biosecurity-advice>

WHAT EXACTLY DO WE MEAN BY POULTRY?

Poultry means all birds that are reared or kept in captivity for the production of meat or eggs for consumption, the production of other commercial products, for restocking supplies of game or for the purposes of any breeding programme for the production of these categories of birds. In this letter, poultry includes game birds. You're a poultry keeper if you're in charge of the day-to-day care of:

- chickens
- turkeys
- ducks
- geese
- guinea fowl
- quail
- partridges
- pheasants
- pigeons