

Avian Influenza – Next Steps

The current Prevention Zone, which expires on 28 February, requires all keepers of poultry and other captive birds in Wales to keep their birds indoors or take all appropriate steps to keep them separate from wild birds, and to enhance biosecurity.

The new Avian Influenza Prevention Zone, which will be in place from 28 February to 30 April, requires all keepers in Wales to put in place mandatory biosecurity measures and complete a [self assessment of biosecurity measures](#) on their premises. Following this, keepers should then adopt one or more of the following: (i) house their birds, (ii) keep them totally separate from wild birds, by use of netting etc or (iii) allow controlled access to outside areas, subject to applying [additional risk mitigation measures](#).

Dr Christianne Glossop said:

“The Cabinet Secretary’s decision to put in place a new Avian Influenza Prevention Zone, covering the whole of Wales, until 30 April is based on sound expert and industry advice.

“The risk of infection from wild birds will not decrease in the coming weeks. The changes to the new Prevention Zone 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 also spoke of the importance of keepers remaining vigilant for signs for the disease and to continue to practice the very highest levels of biosecurity:

“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.”

Dr Gavin Watkins, a senior veterinary officer within the Welsh Government has recorded a [video message](#) with information and advice on the requirements of the new Avian Influenza Prevention Zone.

Further guidance, contact details, latest developments and a copy of the new Declaration are available on the [Welsh Government website](#).

Out of Work Service funding extended until 2020

The Out of Work Programme (OoWS), which was launched in September 2016, provides peer support and employment advice to people recovering from substance misuse and/or mental health issues.

The scheme supports people aged 16-24 who are recovering from substance misuse and, or mental health issues and are not in education, employment or training. It also helps people aged 25 or older who are recovering from substance misuse and, or mental health issues and are long-term unemployed.

The programme is funded by the European Social Fund, Welsh Government and the Substance Misuse Area Planning Boards in Wales. It is available across Wales and in addition to helping people recover and gain life and employability skills, it offers transitional support for up to three months to participants who find work.

The extension of funding will ensure both groups continue receiving support until 2020. Planned total funding for the programme will be £17.3m, including £11.5m from the European Social Fund.

Rebecca Evans said:

“I am pleased to announce the extension of funding for this programme which aims to support up to 14,000 people to overcome their barriers to gaining and staying in employment.

“It will provide new opportunities and improve outcomes for unemployed people, often those furthest from the labour market, so that they can receive the help and support they need to access skills and employment.”

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government, Mark Drakeford, said:

“Being in employment can help people recovering from substance misuse or mental health issues. By removing the barriers to employment, this project is supporting thousands of people across Wales to enter and stay in the job market.

“I am pleased that EU funds have enabled the extension of this programme, enabling many more to benefit from a healthy future.”

Carwyn Connect heads to Penygraig

The Carwyn Connect event will give local people the opportunity to meet the First Minister and ask him questions on any issues which affect them or their local community.

The session will take place between 6pm and 7.30pm at the Soar Centre on Cross Street, Penygraig, Rhondda Cynon Taff, CF40 1LD.

The First Minister has also announced that over the coming weeks he will be holding further Carwyn Connect events in Connah's Quay on Thursday 30 March and Barry on Monday 3 April.

People are encouraged to register their interest in attending the free events online. [Register your interest](#).

Questions can be asked in a number of ways – they can be submitted when people arrive at the venue when doors open at 5.30pm; in advance via email on cabinetcommunications@wales.gsi.gov.uk or via Twitter using @fmwales with the hashtag #carwynconnect.

First Minister of Wales Carwyn Jones said:

“Over the past year, I have travelled across the country to hear the views of local communities and answer the burning questions of the people of Wales.

“I am pleased to announce the next event will take place in Penygraig. I want to see as many people as possible at the event, so if you have a question for me, want to raise issues affecting your community or have a great idea to make your home town a better place to live, come along to the event.

“A wide variety of topics have come up in previous events – from questions about really local issues, to discussions about broad Government policy.

“This is your chance to meet and speak with me in person. I’m really looking forward to meeting you all.”

Welsh Government funding helps children get a Flying Start

The funding, which has been awarded for this financial year (2016-17), will support a wide range of projects from the full refurbishments of several

Flying Start buildings to replacing kitchen cupboards and broken fencing.

Flying Start supports families living in some of the most disadvantaged communities across Wales. It offers twelve and a half hours of high quality childcare a week for 2-3 year olds; support for the development of children's speech, language and communication; parenting support; and an enhanced health visitor service.

Announcing the funding the Cabinet Secretary said:

"Giving children the best possible start in life is a top priority for the Welsh Government. Flying Start is a key early intervention programme, helping to improve children's life chances and reducing the need for later remedial action. It is a useful tool in tackling adverse childhood experiences which can have a long-lasting impact on young people throughout their lives.

"This is why we provide over £70 million a year in revenue funding to Local Authorities to deliver the scheme and why we have already provided £3m of capital funding this year alone to ensure the children have the best possible facilities. This extra £800,000 will ensure more children have a stimulating and exciting environment in which to play and learn."

EU funding to extend financial services graduate programme in Wales

The funding will extend the Wales Financial Services Graduate Programme to 2019 and support a career development programme involving some of Wales' leading financial services companies such as Admiral, Atradius, GM Financial and Principality.

The programme is offering graduate placement opportunities in areas including underwriting, investment management, product development and accounting alongside a fully-funded Masters degree in Financial Services Management.

Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford said:

"This is an excellent programme that is strengthening a key industry while helping to retain ambitious young people in Wales and attract talent to our financial sector.

"I'm delighted that a further £1m of EU funding is supporting this extension and helping to fund more opportunities for young people

to develop successful and rewarding careers in Wales. This is another example which demonstrates how important EU funding is to Wales and reaffirms our case for replacement funding from UK sources after 2020 to help boost the Welsh economy.”

The extension to the programme has also been funded by a £1.4m investment from the participating companies within the Welsh financial services industry.

Sandra Busby, Managing Director of the Welsh Financial Services Forum which leads the Programme said:

“Wales competes against the rest of the world for the top talent in the financial and professional services field and the Welsh Financial Services Graduate Programme has been a key tool in retaining and attracting graduates to Wales, giving them a real taste of how they can build a rewarding career in this field.

“Graduates from Wales and across the globe are undertaking this programme, gaining on-the-job experience at leading organisations while studying towards an MSc in Financial Services Management and then progressing to permanent roles within the sector here in Wales. This has given real evidence that the scheme works and it’s a bold and progressive statement for the Welsh economy that it’s being extended for a further two years thanks to additional EU funding.”