

# News story: Bird flu prevention zone extended to cover whole of England

A bird flu prevention zone has been declared across the whole of England, Chief Veterinary Officer Nigel Gibbens has confirmed today.

This means it is a legal requirement for all bird keepers to follow strict biosecurity measures. It comes as 13 dead wild birds were confirmed to have the virus in Warwickshire.

Last week [17 wild birds tested positive in Dorset](#) and a total of 31 infected birds have now been identified at that site. Defra took swift action to put a local prevention zone in the area on Friday (12 January). However, as these latest results show the disease is not isolated to a single site the decision has been taken to extend the prevention zone across the country on a precautionary basis.

Testing of the birds found in Warwickshire is ongoing, however, it is highly expected that this will be the same H5N6 strain of the virus which has been circulating in wild birds across Europe in recent months. Public Health England have advised the risk to public health remains very low and the Food Standards Agency have said that bird flu does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers.

Chief Veterinary Officer Nigel Gibbens said:

Following the latest finding of bird flu in wild birds in Warwickshire, we are extending our action to help prevent the virus spreading to poultry and other domestic birds.

Whether you keep just a few birds or thousands, you are now legally required to meet enhanced biosecurity requirements and this is in your interests to do, to protect your birds from this highly infectious virus.

## **Biosecurity measures**

The prevention zone means bird keepers across the country must:

- Ensure the areas where birds are kept are unattractive to wild birds, for example by netting ponds, and by removing wild bird food sources;
- Feed and water your birds in enclosed areas to discourage wild birds;
- Minimise movement in and out of bird enclosures;

- Clean and disinfect footwear and keep areas where birds live clean and tidy;
- Reduce any existing contamination by cleansing and disinfecting concrete areas, and fencing off wet or boggy areas.

Keepers with more than 500 birds will also be required to take some extra biosecurity measures including restricting access to non-essential people, changing clothing and footwear before entering bird enclosures and cleaning and disinfecting vehicles.

The prevention zone will be in place until further notice and will be kept under regular review as part of our work to monitor the threat of bird flu.

Poultry keepers and members of the public should report dead wild birds to the Defra helpline on 03459 33 55 77 and keepers should report suspicion of disease to APHA on 03000 200 301. Keepers should familiarise themselves with our [avian flu advice](#).

There are no plans to carry out any culls or put movement restrictions in place.

## Background

- Trade should not be affected following the findings in wild birds, according to the rules of the World Animal Health Organisation (OIE).
- The risk to poultry and other captive birds depends, amongst other things, on the level of biosecurity on the premises and the likely contact between kept birds and wild birds, which is why it is now mandatory that all keepers ensure they practice the highest standards of biosecurity.
- [Keep up to date with the latest avian influenza situation](#)
- There are currently no findings of bird flu in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland and the prevention zone is for England only

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**[News story: First MoT test to remain](#)**

# at 3 years to protect road safety

Ministers put road safety first as they today (18 January 2017) decided to maintain the period before a car's first MoT test at 3 years.

The move comes after a Department for Transport [consultation last year to consider changing the wait before the first test to 4 years](#).

Most of those responding to the consultation were against the proposals on safety grounds, arguing that the savings to motorists were outweighed by the risk to road users and the test often highlights upcoming issues affecting the vehicle. A public survey for DfT by Populus also showed fewer than half of people were in favour of the change.

Roads Minister Jesse Norman said:

We have some of the safest roads in the world, and are always looking at ways of making them safer.

Although modern cars are better built and safer than when the MoT test was last changed 50 years ago, there has been a clear public concern that any further changes don't put people's lives at risk.

We are looking at further research to ensure the MoT test evolves with the demands of modern motoring.

By law, all vehicles must be roadworthy, regardless of whether they have passed an MoT, and the content of the tests will not be changed.

The test was introduced in 1960, requiring vehicles to undergo a first check after 10 years. It was changed in 1967 to 3 years.

In 2016 (the most recent figures available), more than 2.4 million cars had their first MoT test, which costs owners a maximum of £54.85. The pass rate was about 85% and the most common reasons for failure include lighting, tyres and braking faults.

Changing the time period until the first test would have saved motorists more than £100 million a year.

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## Press release: Government sets out

# minimum wage rights for seafarers in UK water

- seafarers in UK internal waters must be paid at least the minimum wage, government warns
- UK Border Force will hand out information in over 50 languages promoting seafarers' workers' rights
- new Business Minister affirms workers playing a 'vital' role in UK waters should be paid fairly

All seafarers working in UK waters must be paid at least minimum wage rates, the government warned in new [guidance](#) published today (18 January 2018).

It comes after concerns about unfair competition, following reports that some ships registered abroad were underpaying their workers in UK waters, undercutting UK crews.

UK Border Force patrols will be handing out information to seafarers and employers in more than 50 languages promoting minimum wage law.

Employers failing to pay at least National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage can face fines of up to 200% of the underpayment, public naming and, for the worst offences, criminal prosecution.

Business Minister Andrew Griffiths said:

Seafarers' work is vital to key UK industries such as fishing, oil and gas. We are determined to ensure they are paid fairly for the work they do, often in challenging conditions.

Today we are making it crystal clear that if you work in UK waters you are entitled to at least the minimum wage and all employers – no matter where they're from – must pay it.

Border Force's Modern Slavery Maritime lead Rob Meyer said:

Border Force takes its role of tackling exploitation and protecting vulnerable people very seriously. We have run a number of maritime operations targeting unscrupulous employers in the sector, and are working with government enforcement agencies to take action taken against the minority of employers who do not treat their workers in line with UK law.

Minimum wage law applies to seafarers:

- when they are working on ships within UK waters and ports regardless of where the ship is registered, or where the worker ordinarily works or

lives

- on a foreign ship for work performed outside the UK if they ordinarily work in the UK
- on UK registered ships if some of their work is in the UK and they live in the UK

If anyone is concerned that they are not receiving at least the minimum wage, they can [check their pay online](#), or contact [Acas](#) in confidence, on 0300 123 1100.

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## **News story: UK to step up French operations in Africa as PM and President Macron meet for UK-France Summit**

The Prime Minister is expected to make the announcement as part of the UK-France Summit at The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, where she will discuss the UK's strong and wide-ranging bilateral relationship with President Macron.

The helicopters, which will provide logistic support to French troops, are part of a wider effort to increase stability in the Sahel region of Africa in order to tackle Islamist terrorism.

UK and French efforts in the region aim to provide greater stability, reducing the global terrorist threat and stemming the flow of illegal migration to Europe.

The UK has been a long-standing supporter of UN, EU and African Union military operations in Mali and has worked with international partners to prevent extremists from using the ungoverned space in the Sahel to plan and launch attacks on Europe, as well as counter the illegal trade in people, drugs, weapons and wildlife.

This is in addition to existing wider support to Africa including doubling our UN peacekeeping contribution with additional deployments to South Sudan and Somalia. Today the UK and France also agreed to work together to ensure EU African Peace Facility funding for AMISOM in Somalia.

The deployment of Chinooks to Mali will increase British support to France's Operation BARKHANE, in addition to strategic air transport flights already being carried out by the RAF.

British military personnel will not be involved in combat operations, but the deployment of Chinooks will provide a niche capability providing logistical support but also saving lives by avoiding the need to move troops by ground where they are more vulnerable to attack.

Alongside the military contribution, DfID will allocate £50m of additional aid including lifesaving humanitarian support for hundreds of thousands of people affected by epidemics, natural disasters and conflict across Mali, Niger, Chad, North Cameroon, Burkina Faso and Mauritania.

This will provide 320,000 people with emergency food and nutrition support and provide protection for 255,000 internally displaced people, returnees, refugees and their host communities. It will also supply clean water and better sanitation for 150,000 people.

The FCO is also exploring ways to better support the UK national interest in the region by enhancing the UK diplomatic presence.

In addition, the Home Office will work with key African partners to build their capability to tackle human trafficking in support of the UK's migration and modern slavery agenda. Discussions on taking this work forward will take place with the French after the Summit.

France has also agreed to commit troops to the UK-led NATO battlegroup in Estonia in 2019, building on the successful joint deployment which the Prime Minister and President Macron visited together last year. These personnel will make up part of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in Eastern Europe, providing deterrence in the face of increasing Russian assertiveness.

This further deployment of UK and French forces alongside our Estonian allies represents both the UK and France's shared commitment to upholding the deterrence and defence posture of NATO, and more widely our firm resolve and commitment to European security.

Today's Summit, which will be attended by UK Cabinet Ministers and their counterparts, will mark President Macron's first visit to the UK as President.

While Summits in previous years have focussed on defence and security, foreign policy and nuclear energy, the 2018 Summit will be broadened to cover the full spectrum of the UK-France bilateral relationship including prosperity, innovation, science and education.

Hundreds of thousands of British citizens live in France while hundreds of thousands of French nationals have chosen to make the UK their home. And the two countries share £71billion in trade, making France the UK's third largest trading partner.

The Summit today will reflect the broadness of the UK-France relationship, with wide-ranging discussions also expected to focus on how the two countries can work together to address the challenges and seize the opportunities presented by new technologies.

Ministers will also discuss ways in which the existing deep linguistic and cultural ties between the UK and France can be strengthened through pupil exchanges and shared education and cultural initiatives.

As well as attending the Summit the Prime Minister and President are expected to have a private lunch and attend a reception at the Victoria and Albert Museum in the evening.

The Prime Minister said:

Today's Summit will underline that we remain committed to defending our people and upholding our values as liberal democracies in the face of any threat, whether at home or abroad.

But our friendship has always gone far beyond defence and security and the scope of today's discussions represents its broad and unique nature.

And while this Summit takes place as the UK prepares to leave the EU, this does not mean that the UK is leaving Europe.

What is clear from the discussions we will have today is that a strong relationship between our two countries is in the UK, France and Europe's interests, both now and into the future.

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## **Speech: New Towns: launch of the All-Party Parliamentary Group**

Good evening and thank you, Lucy. It's a pleasure to be here.

Now, we all know the jokes about roundabouts, concrete wastelands and ring roads.

The references to eternity looking like Milton Keynes.

The people who make these jokes have no idea what they're talking about.

If they want to know what eternity feels like, try being a politician waiting for the call from No.10 on reshuffle day!

But, seriously, as the launch of this APPG shows, New Towns have got a lot to offer.

That we need to do more to ensure they're fit for the future.

And that we have an ambitious vision for the New Towns of the 21st century.

One man who certainly wasn't lacking in vision was Ebenezer Howard, the pioneer whose garden cities inspired the New Towns.

But it's fair to say that not everyone bought into his dreams of marrying the best of city and rural living.

Even the progressive Fabian News said rather sniffily:

"His plans would have been in time if they had been submitted to the Romans when they conquered Britain...

But Ebenezer Howard's achievements; as an urban planner whose influence can still be felt, here and abroad, speak for themselves.

They're all the more remarkable considering that his day job was as a Hansard short-hand copy-taker right here in Parliament.

So maybe I need to look a little closer to home for solutions to the housing crisis!

And it's especially pleasing to have the Town and Country Planning Association...

...the organisation Howard founded...

...supporting this APPG and represented here today.

Your input, and the history behind it, underlines that the challenges Howard sought to address are just as relevant today.

Not enough good quality affordable housing.

Overcrowding.

The belief that everyone deserves to live in a strong, vibrant community.

Of course, the bleak industrial backdrop that spawned Howard's garden cities has long gone.

But the desire for people to live somewhere they can find work, build families, get about easily, and enjoy green space has not.

It's the most basic of desires – the desire for a place to call home.

And it's this issue of place...

...how to build not just more homes, but strong communities...

...that goes to the heart of the challenge we face as a country.

A challenge we're determined to meet – as underlined by the recent change in my department's name...



...to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

And the launch of a new national housing agency, Homes England.

A challenge that the important work of this APPG has an opportunity to inform.

Because there's little doubt that there are valuable lessons to be learned from New Towns.

Many, like those represented by my honourable friends here today,...

...are home to successful companies

...offer affordable homes

...and job opportunities that attract inward commuters.

But the downsides of the rapid development and, in particular, centralised planning, that underpinned New Towns are all too evident.

Dated, often identikit housing, infrastructure and town centres that, too often, look like everywhere and nowhere.

That don't just make these towns the butt of lazy jokes...

...but make it harder for them to be seen as truly aspirational and attract the investment they need to grow and thrive.

Like you, I want this to change.

And I can see that many new towns are stepping up to the challenge.

Some, like Bracknell, are making intelligent use of their existing assets...

...and making a virtue of the need for massive regeneration to offer investors and developers scale of opportunity.

Others, such as Crawley, are introducing a richer mix of shopping opportunities and development...

...by breaking down the original blocky zoning and the inner ring roads.

And we're seeing high quality and better design informing the development of Lightmoor Village in Telford.

A development that, fittingly, is being driven by a partnership between Homes England and Bournville...

...one of the first and still most successful New Towns.

And I see partnerships; between central and local government, between local government and the private sector, as very much the way forward.

For regenerating existing New Towns and driving the delivery of new ones.

Again, Lucy's constituency, is showing just what's possible through initiatives such as the Telford Land Deal.

A partnership between:

- the government
- Homes England
- the local council
- and Marches LEP

...that will deliver 2,800 new homes and 8,500 new jobs.

The key thing with this Deal, is that it's led, not centrally, miles away from the communities concerned...

...even if that approach had worked previously, it wouldn't be right for the times we live in.

Instead, it's led locally by those who know Telford best – the people who live and work there.

This shows that government and New Towns can work innovatively to power further growth.

And that we're open to other New Towns coming to us with ideas.

We're already supporting 24 locally led garden cities, towns and villages...

...ranging in size from 1,500 new homes to over 20,000, from Cornwall to Cumbria.

Some are being built on land where there are few or no houses at the moment.

Others will provide transformational growth to existing settlements.

All reflect their particular local circumstances and share a focus on quality and good design...

...echoing the commitments in our [Housing White Paper](#).

The recent Budget...

...the biggest and boldest for housing for decades...

...built on these commitments to back five new locally led Garden Towns in places where demand is high.

A million new homes in the Oxford-Milton Keynes-Cambridge corridor by 2050...

...a hugely ambitious project which I was delighted to appoint my honourable friend, Iain Stewart, to champion.

And also the first of our ambitious Housing Deals...

...with Oxfordshire, to deliver 100,000 homes by 2031, backed by £215 million of funding for infrastructure.

We all know that the right infrastructure is absolutely vital for New Towns.

So the Budget's doubling of investment in the Housing Infrastructure Fund to £5 billion can only be good news.

As are our legislative changes to reboot New Town Development Corporations – the vehicle for the post-war New Towns.

So you can count on our support.

But I won't pretend that we have all the answers.

Which is why I am keen to learn from the important work you'll be undertaking; to better understand the challenges and opportunities for New Towns.

To consider how can we do more to support the people and places you serve.

And deliver the next wave of garden towns and villages.

So congratulations again on today's launch and all the best for your work ahead.

As a government, we've made some great strides, having delivered more than a million homes since 2010.

And helped over 255,000 households buy their own home through Help to Buy.

But there's clearly a long way to go to deliver the 300,000 homes a year on average we will need by the mid 2020s.

New towns have an important role to play in helping us fix our broken housing market.

But I know we'll really have succeeded when the joke isn't on New Towns, but those who knock them.

Thank you.